NEBRASKA PIONEERS

BY

F. G. STILGEBOUER

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Nebraska Pioneers

Nebraska Pioneers

The Story of Sixty-Five Years of Pioneering
In Southwest Nebraska

1875-1940

by

F. G. STILGEBOUER

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DEDICATED TO

The Memory of My Father, Mother and Wife,
who shared many of the events with me,
recorded in this book.

CONTENTS

PART I. — Background — 1868-1875

Appreciation 9
Prefaces 10
Foreword 17
Chapter 1 — Beecher Island Fight, 1868 21
Chapter 2 — Story of the Fight by Scout John Hurst 31
Chapter 3 — Story of the Fight by Scout Schlesinger 42
Chapter 4 — Beecher Island Memorial Association 54
Chapter 5 — Address of Dr. C. A. Brooks, September, 1905 64
Chapter 6 — Massacre of Nelson Buck Surveying Party, 1869 75
Chapter 7 — The Battle of Massacre Canyon between Sioux and Pawnees. Dedication of the Monument 77
Chapter 8 — History of the First Settlement 98
Chapter 9 — History of First Settlements and Organization of Decatur County on the South in 1872 115

PART II. — 1875-1940

Chapter 10 — Pioneers — Short History of My People 129
Chapter 11 — Our Trip To Nebraska 137
Chapter 12 — My First Buffalo Hunt 144
Chapter 13 — Indian Massacre on Sappa Near Us, 1875 155
Chapter 14 — Schools Days — Its Primitive Beginnings 165
Chapter 15 — Early Day Planting and Farming 172
Chapter 16 — Indian Scares 180
Chapter 17 — School Days and Recreation 189
Chapter 18 — Indian Raid, 1878 199
Chapter 19 — Indian Raid as Experienced by our Family and Others 217
Chapter 20 — Horse Thieves and Sod House 231
Chapter 21 — Burlington Railroad and History of C. B. & Q...237

Chapter 22 – Progress, 1880 253
Chapter 23 – Covered Wagon – Our Trip to Illinois 260
Chapter 24 – School Days – School Teacher 265
Chapter 25 – Lebanon Founded as C. B. & Q. Builds Up the Beaver 275
Chapter 26 – We Attend Institute, Continue Teaching 278
Chapter 27 – My Marriage in 1888 284
Chapter 28 – My Brother Will's Marriage in 1889 290
Chapter 29 – Public Office 295
Chapter 30 – Battle for Relocation of County Seat 302
Chapter 31 – I Begin My Banking Career 312
Chapter 32 – Farming and School Teaching, 1897 325
Chapter 33 – 1904–Banking Under My Personal Direction....332
Chapter 34 – 1917–Location in Banking 347
Chapter 35 – World War and other Events 351
Chapter 36 – Banking 361
Chapter 37 – The Lincoln Robbery, a $2,000,000 Robbery....370
Chapter 38 – 1932–Deflated Values. Many Bank Failures....383
Chapter 39 – Golden Wedding. 1888-1938 392
Chapter 40 – Masonry and Star 398
Chapter 41 – Old Settler's Pageant 406

List of Illustrations

1. Beecher Island Monument 55
2. Massacre Canyon Monument 78
3. Dull Knife, Fierce Warrior 218
4. Picture of Solomon W. Stilgebouer Family 234
5. Sod House, the Home of Solomon W. Stilgebouer and Family 235
6. A Picture of My Wife's Family, John W. Ruby 284
7. A Picture of Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Stilgebouer taken on their 25th Wedding Anniversary 346
8. A Picture of Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Stilgebouer, taken prior to their Golden Wedding. Fifty Years of Wedded Happiness..392

APPRECIATION

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lincoln, Nebraska

January 16, 1943

(*Extracts from a letter written by the late A. E. Sheldon, Superintendent, to the Author.*)

Quote:

We are interested in securing the publication of books on Nebraska History, especially those which describe personal experiences of people who have been in Nebraska for many years, and in points of contact with human life as it has moved to and fro.

Your manuscript is such an historical account. I have gone over it very rapdily, just enough to get its general view and contribution to the story of our state. I would very much like to see your manuscript published.

Far out there at Benkelman, you have had close connection with Nebraska life different from those in this part of the state. Your personal contribution will be valuable after all of us are gone. I am glad you have not put your project off too late, and I counsel you to proceed diligently to its completion. You can probably spend no money to greater satisfaction to your friends and family, than to leave this personal record of those who have seen and heard on this Nebraska Southwestern Frontier.

Sincerely yours,

A. E. SHELDON,
Superintendent.

PREFACE

By Chas. H. Sloan

of Geneva, Nebraska, Lawyer, Banker, Farmer, Congressman and Writer

History is the mausoleum of all intelligent experiences. It preserves the best, and does not conceal the worst of all the selected deeds of mankind. He who writes of a nation or a state steps from plain to mountain, and from mountain to another, and steps across lakes and seas, climbing the heights and spanning the valleys. His audience is the multitude.

Biography, meaning the writings concerning man, has for his audience that which he has learned, casually or otherwise selected facts for a selected audience. The selection being sometimes affection, sometimes curiosity, sometimes accident or chance. The information is casual or may be the result of investigation. In any event the writer knows personally but few facts of the subject discussed. His audience receives information largely hearsay and perhaps biased and prejudiced. But when an individual writes his own life history he has the knowledge, he knows, the large and small facts of his subject's life, and is at once the witness, the judge, and the recorder of that which may go out to many readers.

It is a brave man indeed who undertakes to reveal to the public the salient facts of his many years' career. He must have exercised the element of industry, he must have the rare judgment of selection as to what may please, displease and inform. He must have a strong and retentive memory, with senses developed so as to convey the impressions with accuracy, intelligence and a good measure of the three rules of word selection, which we call diction, being purity, propriety and precision. So that as the leaves are turned, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and chapters in their turn will have a unity, to be formed in which there will be balance, completeness and satisfaction to the avid and laborious reader.

Of all the individuals born on earth, they say no two ever were precisely alike; and as few biographies have been written, auto or otherwise, we must conclude that he who would write an autobiography must differ from all other biographies and the more this difference appears usually the more readable is the book.

We have had many biographies written throughout the ages. Many of them have been produced by the page and chapter measure, either for a special purpose or a stated emolument in which cases few are read with interest to the end.

This will not be within the last stated class. The subject from early childhood was in a period of development and in different places, in varied pursuits and in several callings finding the ultimate climax of an interesting youth, an active manhood, a successful career, of good standing, a wealth of experience, and crowned by a good measure of success. In a community unfavored by nature, rendered perilous by barbarians, made hard by the unwisdom from time to time of those who would lead and guide, and without that wisdom, sagacity and far vision which the conditions and circumstances of the times distinctly demanded.

I read with increasing interest the excellent manuscript. In each chapter I found features, personal and general, which must appeal to many interested in the history and development of our western plains, and especially to those residents living within a radius of that area where lies the public alphabetic parlance of the day, "N.K. & C. tri-state corners."

The writer has read many books of venture, battle, romance and history of our plains country, and here and there a typical biography, auto or otherwise, of some noted characters of whom there were many well worthy. Here, however, we have the history of a man written by himself in which the subject is not neglected, but those from whom he sprang, those with whom he associated, in many capacities and relationships, are kept in the foreground, that credit may fall and little criticism or blame be attached.

He aided and cooperated with unfailing loyalty under the parental roof, in school, his employees, church and public. He grew with this western community. Not always prospering, now and then being reversed. More than ordinarily happy in his marital and parental relations. Saddened in bereavements, he set his high calling to accomplish his life's ambition, and do that which his loved departed ones would have him do. He seemed to have carried successfully the hazard involved in the saying: "Beware when all men speak well of you." So his life experiences did not clash with his memory or his pen.

Men and women make history, few record it, and less publish it, omitting the last and best service. In this case it was of the best service to his community, district, state or nation. The readers of this book will often be surprised and mayhap astonished at the many favoring facts, past and present, concerning the area covered. They cannot fail to be the source of inspiration of the youth of today, gratifying to those in middle life, and comforting reminiscenses of those approaching life's sunset.

The care and resulting accuracy in which this book was written warrants it being a record of authority, and will be of surpassing interest and value for generations to come.

The production of this book at the author's time of life prompts me to congratulate him on the "Spirit of '76."

Sincerely yours,

CHAS. H. SLOAN

PREFACE

By George W. Woods

Executive Vice-President First National Bank, Council Bluffs, Iowa.
Former Superintendent of Banking, Pioneer.

I have read *Sixty-five Years in Southwest Nebraska* in manuscript, and it has afforded an extraordinary pleasure. The author is a life-long personal friend. My family moved to Red Willow County just thirteen years after the Stilgebouers had moved there. Our two homesteads were less than a mile and a half apart so that I have known the territory and the events described in Mr. Stilgeboer's book quite intimately since 1888, and I am happy to say that my experience, observations and memories accord one hundred percent with those of Mr. Stilgebouer during all of this particular period.

As to events preceding 1888 and reaching back to 1875, when Mr. Steilgebouer first located in Red Willow County, I find my memory in rather sharp contrast with his, but in one particular only. He was a real pioneer; he saw the country before it was settled, when buffalo and antelope and marauding Indians were still roaming the plains; loneliness and fear were then extremely real. But, during the brief thirteen years – from 1875 to 1888 – changes occurred in Southwest Nebraska with startling rapidity. The Burlington Railroad was pushed through to Denver in 1881; shortly thereafter branch lines were built to Oberlin, St. Francis, and from Holdrege to Sterling, Colorado. By 1888 a stranger could hardly have suspected that McCook was less than ten years old. It was a flourishing community with 2,000 or 2,500 population, substantial business houses, comfortable homes with fine lawns and handsome growing trees. The entire town was neat and attractive in appearance.

All the upland farms – from the Medicine on the North to the Sappa in Decatur County, Kansas, on the South – had been taken over and were being held by actual owners as tree claim or homestead or both. At that time, these tree claims presented a beautiful appearance. From the farm on which I lived, we had sufficient elevation to command a considerable panorama, and we could look in every direction and count from thirty to forty beautiful groves of ten acres each, as required by the law, and these trees were then from ten to twenty feet high. Parenthetically, a few years later all these trees were dead — victims of repeated drouths.

But the country was then settled. The farm lands between the various streams were occupied in greater degree than at any time since. Trains were running; mails were received promptly; newspapers, churches and schools had been established, and to me the entire Southwest Nebraska, so far as I could view it, seemed as thoroughly established and as well settled as Mahaska County, Iowa, from which I had migrated; so to me Indian wars and lonely terror, experienced by the earliest settlers, seemed as remote and far away as the Colonial Indian fights in Virginia and Massachusetts. However, I did talk with older settlers, many of whom had moved to Southwest Nebraska before Mr. Stilgebouer, and they all confirmed the statements he makes as to that earlier period. But the worst vicissitudes — drouths, floods, grasshoppers, unbalanced prices and depressions — all came on after 1888, as set forth in the book.

In writing and compiling *Sixty-five Years in Southwest Nebraska,* Mr. Stilgebouer has been painstaking and conscientious. He has done his utmost to be accurate and trustworthy; and to achieve these objectives, he has quoted extensively from other pioneers.

I know that Mr. Stilgebouer has been particularly scrupulous and conscientious in compiling this book, since one of his impelling motives has been his desire to produce a book which may prove a fitting memorial to his wife, Rosa Stilgebouer, who passed away in January, 1940.

It was my good fortune to know Mrs. Stilgebouer through all the years I have known her husband. She was admirable —

gentle, kindly, devoted, lovable. Over at Danbury in 1888, other folks referred to her as the finest young woman in the community and said she is going to marry Forster Stelgebouer. And be it also said, Forster was just as highly respected in that community and the coming marriage was unanimously approved. It was a perfect omen — no marriage could have been more successful.

Council Bluffs, Iowa — December 7, 1943.

FOREWORD

By the AUTHOR

When I began the study of history, the first definition I committed to memory was that "History is a recital of what has happened." And the second was very similar, but with a distinct difference. It was "History is a record of past events." These two definitions cover all the historical facts, both recited and recorded. Naturally, much of recorded history is indebted to a "recital of what has happened." For very few historical facts are or have been recorded at the time of occurrence, but are handed down through recital, hours, weeks, months and years after the events took place. Again, the recorded history is many times influenced by the time, place, and viewpoint of the individual, group or country experiencing those events. Hence a great difference of opinion is often expressed in the recital and recording of that history.

The writer has lived sixty-five years in southwestern Nebraska, has seen and experienced its transition from the prairie, Indians and buffalo, to its proud position as a part of one of the important commonwealths of this great nation. Aside from experiencing as boy and man this transition, I have interviewed many of the first settlers and old-timers, listened to their stories and their reactions and to the part they played in this great drama.

In the settlement of all frontiers from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and particularly from the Eastern shores westward, one important fact that must ever be taken into consideration, and fully understood in order to realize some of the difficulties, sacrifices and loss of life and loved ones, was the depredations and hostility of the American Indian. As to the justification of this hostility to the white encroachment on his domain down through the years, this I leave to History and the judgment of its readers, but I do want to lay a background covering some events that took place seven years before and some of the years intervening from that time, 1868, to the time of our coming in 1875. To do this, I of necessity must rely on the recorded history of others, as gleaned through research, and to whom is given full credit.

I feel that the foundation for future settlement of southwestern Nebraska, Northwest Kansas and Eastern Colorado, was laid in what is known as the Beecher Island Fight, wherein 50 scouts and their commanders, General Forsythe and Lieutenant Fred Beecher, had the most terrific fight that ever took place with the Indians in the west. It outranks the Custer Massacre on the Little Big Horn, for that was a massacre, and was soon over with.

In laying this background of recorded events, I think it well to start with the causes of the Beecher Island Fight, and its results. Fortunately, men who took part in this great crisis have recorded the facts, and in this story a few have been quoted that will give a complete understanding of the situation. To Robert Lyman of Wray, Colorado, a Civil War veteran who is now deceased, must be given credit in the assembling of this information in the Beecher Island Annual of 1930.

When this story of Beecher Island is completed, others will follow until you will have a word-picture of the situation as it was when we came to Nebraska in 1875.

In 1878, just ten years after the Beecher Island fight, another Indian Raid took place in which the writer had a small part. This raid will be described at some length, in order that the reader may have a full understanding of what "Governmental Red Tape" means while people are being killed, their property destroyed, and other depredations perpetrated too horrid to record. In this writing, aside from quotations, (for all of them I have permission, and due credit is given), my own thoughts, feelings and volitions will predominate, and incidents that stand out most vividly in my memory, it being essentially a story of my life of sixty-five years in southwestern Nebraska, as boy, man, farmer, school teacher, and banker.

Chas. H. Sloan, who wrote one of the forewords of this book, also wrote a few lines concerning each chapter that I do think will add to the value of the book, and the pleasure in reading it.

In his study of the manuscript and its analysis, he caught the spirit and accuracy that the author and compiler intended, hence his writing will precede each chapter.

With this foreword, we start with the history of the

BEECHER ISLAND FIGHT

PART I. -- Background -- 1868-1875

Chapter 1

BEECHER ISLAND FIGHT 1868

Background of Causes, by Thomas Ranahan

Tri-State Corner Tract.

IN EARLY Nebraska history there was and is connection with Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. A leading section in early progress, agriculture, transportation, business and politics, which was the really influential part of Nebraska in the early day. They were a factor of interstate development, and the Nebraska part has continued as a factor in state development, wealth, education and politics. To the capitols, Lincoln and Washington, they sent many eminent statesmen and jurists.

They had dependable rainfall and wonderful soil, and recently developed the one great liquid mineral in a state hitherto termed without a mine. More than three hundred miles westward to Nebraska's southwest corner, contiguous to cornering Colorado and Kansas, was in the early day just outside of nowhere in the calculations and prospects of Nebraska. And yet in the course of four score years, we find developed a comparatively rich agricultural area producing in cereals and live stock-producing animals, which per capita vies with and rivals the old eastern area in furnishing during ours and the world's years emergency relatively more of the most desired and insistent calls for materials for our army's maintenance and support. Within this western tract there is a bank exceeding in deposits any banking institution within the older area in which it was dominant and the occidental was practically unknown. Within this, and growing up with it from early boyhood, was F. G. Stilgebouer, who presents his biography, not in fulsome praise of his achievements, but as an anchorage for the historic events of nearly three score and ten years.

To begin with, this area was considered a part of the Almighty's manifest neglect. It has become a proving ground of what opportunity, industry and enterprise may be accomplished under most discouraging prospects. In course of time, courage, enterprise and industry, many God fearing people came to this area, and despite handicaps, hardships, crop-failures, pestilence, untimely deaths, disappointments, and cruel barbarism, have in their own way carved a place in the Nebraska sun and a part in our national emergency and the world's destiny.

The author came into this community following a period, local in character, but somewhat akin to the condition of the world today. Lust for blood and cruelty to man.

In Chapter One he brings the reader in close and reliable touch with historic evidence from the pens of those who knew, witnessed and had part in the battles between the Pale and Bronze Faces of that place and times. There is testimony and narrative touching great characters including General Phillip Sheridan, Governor Anthony, Harney, Forsyth, Mitchell and others who in their own way aided in defense and winning of the West.

The Eubank mother and child tragedy was typical of the massacre of the Big Pawnees and the Sioux. Charles Sprague, the gifted defender of our first title holding aborigines, wrote:

"Lo, the Poor Indian
Whose untutored mind
Sees God in the storm
And hears Him in the wind."

But Lo the tutored Indian
Saw no guard in the tent
And he followed up the wind,
Saw Pale Face out in the storm
And shot him from behind.
He saw coming from fort, no help,
So he finished the job
By lifting Pale Face's scalp.

What Caused the Beecher Island Fight.

(*by Scout Thomas Ranahan*)

"I will attempt to explain the cause of the Beecher Island fight, as I have been requested to undertake this by Mr. J. J. Peete of Beverly, Kansas, one of the Forsyth Scouts, who is still living, and I will do this to the best of my ability.

The direct cause of the Beecher Island fight may be traced back to 1862 and 1864, when the Brule-Sioux and Ogallalah Indians, which were the northern tribes of the Sioux Indians, murdered all of the settlers in three counties in Minnesota, and took all the guns and ammunition and stock of these settlers. It took the state of Minnesota a year and a half to get rid of these Indians. They raised a home guard in the state of Minnesota, western Wisconsin and western Iowa, and this home guard never let up on these Indians until they had driven them across the Mississippi and Missouri rivers; they ran them into western Nebraska. The first stop was in a very rough country at the junction of the North Platte and South Platte rivers, at what is called O'Fallen's Bluff. I saw them there in the fall of 1864. I was then in the employ of the Overland Stage Company, which carried the mail from the Missouri River to California. O'Fallen's Bluff was on the middle division between Ft. Kearney, Nebraska, and Julesburg, Colorado.

These Indians did not do anything for a year or a year and a half except kill buffalo. They were very destitute when they came out there and had nothing but a few nearly worn out ponies. By 1866 they had tanned enough buffalo robes for tepees to be comfortable, and had cured enough meat for provisions, but they did not have any ponies. They were very quiet for about ten months after they had their supplies all in, and in 1866 they visited the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and also the Red Cloud band of Sioux to sort of get acquainted.

In their council they had made up their minds to murder all of the frontier people in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska, and there were only two drawbacks to this.

They had two enemies whom they dreaded more than they did the Whites, and these were the Pawnee Indians of Nebraska, and the Kaw Indians of Kansas, who were then Reservation Indians. These two tribes were about 250 miles apart. The Pawnee Indians lived in Nebraska on the Little Blue River and near Grand Island, Nebraska. This was their hunting ground, and the Kaw Indians were on a reservation on the Neosha River. They were bitter enemies to these plains Indians, and it was here that the Ogallalah and the Brules got their ponies. They had made up their minds before they tackled the whites to steal all of the horses these Pawnee Indians had in order to make a clear fight against the Whites, as these Kaw and Pawnee Indians would help the Whites, as they were friendly toward them, and the only way to put these Kaw and Pawnee Indians out of commission was to steal their ponies.

There was only one regiment of the United States soldiers in the 400 miles north and south by 500 miles east and west country. I do not remember the number of the regiment, but Colonel Sculley was their colonel, and this regiment was anywhere in this space of country, and these Indians wanted these soldiers out of the way before they made war on the settlers.

These Indians commenced stealing stock and committing all sorts of depredations on the Platte River, and kept on doing this all that spring, which was 1868, and then they got Colonel Sculley with a regiment of soldiers down on the Indian Territory line and kept him there until they got their horses rested up and then they started back for Nebraska. They wanted to clean their enemies out of all the stock, and were very successful in doing this. They stole 400 head of ponies from the Kaw Indians, taking their whole herd and in this way the Kaw Indians could not hurt them, as they had no ponies.

After this they raided the settlers on the Neosha River of what stock they could get; after which they came north to the Smoky Hill River and stole lots of stock there and got away with it. The next settlement they raided was the Saline River in Kansas, the principal settlers there were the people who had been in the Civil War. The Indians commenced stealing their stock and these settlers on the Saline River would not stand for this, but made them fight. The Indians did not want to fight, but these settlers were soldiers who had been in the Civil War and made them fight. After this the Indians tackled the Solomon River settlement and cleaned that up. By this time they had an immense herd of stock. In these raids on the Saline, Solomon, Settle and Smokey Rivers they killed a good many settlers. (I saw 69 of these dead myself.) I did not count them, but this is what I was told by the people who were on the platform; these people who were killed were mostly women and children, and they were all scalped.

This aroused the settlers, and General Sheridan with the governor of Kansas and about 300 or 400 of the state militia, and the Indian Commission was also with them, came out to make peace with the Indians, but the settlers would not stand for this. The settlers were so worked up that they wanted to kill the Indian Commission, which had come out from Washington, and I know the militia, the governor of Kansas and General Sheridan were not the means of saving the lives of this Indian Commission. I was in Ellsworth at this time myself, and know a great deal in regard to it. One of the commission was old General Harney. The hotel where this Indian Commission stopped was called the McMeakin House. There was a small porch on the second story and General Harney came out onto this porch and talked to the settlers and told them that he knew what their intentions were and that it was, to do away with this Indian Commission, and said that if they intended to do this to begin on him; the settlers said, "No, general, we don't want your life, but we want that damn Smith, the chairman of your commission." General Harney then asked the mob if he could come down and reason and talk with them and they told him, "Yes."

It was never known definitely who headed this mob, as there were people from all over Kansas, North, South, East and West, but I have been told that it was a man by the name of Captain Kingsbury. He was a veteran of the Civil War.

General Harney finally came down and reasoned with the mob, and the mob wanted to know where the governor was, whether he was in the hotel. General Harney told them that he had not yet seen the governor. This conference finally broke up in a dispute.

General Sheridan then came out and talked to the mob and told them that he was the commanding officer of the department, and that he did not ask favors of them, but that he was there to clean up the Indians, and if they would give him time and their good will that he would do so. This sort of pacified the mob. He told them that he had soldiers who were then leaving Virginia, and that if they would give him time and good will that he had about 6,000 or 8,000 soldiers coming to clean up the Indians and then they would have no more trouble with them, and the settlers had every confidence in him that he would do what he said.

In those days the Post was called "Fort Harker" and the town was about four miles from the post, and it is now called Ellsworth, Kansas.

General Sheridan went over to the post and had a talk with the Adjutant General Crosby; and told him that he believed he would get a bunch of these frontier people to act as scouts to keep track of these Indians. He had a talk with General Forsyth, and I will attempt to tell how the Forsyth Scouts were formed, but there is a very good printed account of this on record by General Forsyth. These scouts were organized and enlisted to keep track of this band of Indians and to keep peace until he could get some regulars on the ground, and it is my understanding that it was under these conditions that the Forsyth Scouts were in service, and I consider that these Forsyth Scouts saved the Pawnee Indians all of their ponies and stock, as these Indians were making straight for the Pawnee Indians to clean them up also.

After all this trouble on the Saline, Smoky Hill and Solomon Rivers, the Forsyth Scouts were organized at once, and I dare say that there are some of the descendants now living in Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado.

These outrages had become too numerous to mention, but I will say that the peoples of the states of Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado owe a debt of gratitude and honor to General George Alexander Forsyth, Fred H. Beecher and Dr. Mooers, the army surgeon, and to the fifty men under them. It was they who were responsible for keeping the Indians from raiding the settlers on the frontier in Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. The main town of the white people in those days was Denver on the west, which was a town of between 3,000 and 4,000 people. They had to build block houses all around this town and keep guard all summer to save the lives of the whites.

At Fort Kearney, Nebraska, no emigrants were permitted to start west that summer unless they were well armed and there were at least 300 people in the train. They would keep them there until this number had been gathered together before they would permit them to start west.

I will give you a partial list of the troubles there were between 1864 and 1868. It was started in Nebraska on the Little Blue River in 1864, but not a general warfare, but were raids more for stock. There was considerable fighting there. The Indians burned a wagon train of twenty-five wagons loaded with Chinaware for the west. They had a massacre on Plum Creek and the Indians captured Mrs. Jessie Eubanks and her sister and Mrs. Eubanks' child on the Little Blue River. They kept them captives and took them to the head of Plum Creek. Here Mrs. Eubanks' sister took a rope from the horse she was riding and hung herself the first night after they had been captured. They took Mrs. Eubanks' child and killed it before her eyes. Mrs. Eubanks was with them two years before she was finally rescued by Colonel Plum, either on the Sweet Water or Powder Rivers in Wyoming.

I will just mention the different fights they had with these Indians during the summer of 1867 and 1868.

There was a fight at Ogallalah station, forty-five miles west of Kearney, where the Indians tried to capture a stage and killed two stage horses, but they were finally driven off by settlers and soldiers. Then there was a fight at O'Fallen's Bluff, and a pretty bad one, between the Indians and emigrants with ox teams; then at Alkalie, fifty miles from O'Fallen's Bluff, where three families were wiped out; the next fight was at Julesburg, Colorado, where they burned the stage station and the grain of the stage company and stole all of the stage supplies.

The next fight was at Mud Springs, Wyoming. The next was at Junction Station at the South Platte River at the stage station, run by Godfrey. This was the best fight ever made by five people—Mr. Godfrey, three freighters and Mrs. Godfrey, were all that were fighting. The next was at Fremont's Orchard in Colorado. This was in 1868; the next was on Crow Creek about 35 or 40 miles east of Cheyenne; the next was on the Cache la Poudre, about 12 miles east of Fort Collins; the next was at Fort St. Vrain, in Colorado; the next one was on Sand Creek, ten miles east of Denver.

Then there was a fight by Captain Graham and a company of colored soldiers, thirty miles south of Cheyenne Wells; the next was at Kiowa, 50 miles southeast of Denver; the next twenty-four miles south of Colorado City at the Fountain; the next was on the Saline, Solomon and Smoky Hill Rivers in Kansas; the next was at Fossil Creek, where Fossil Creek empties into the Smoky Hill River. The next was at Chalk Bluffs and the next at Downey.

Captain Sanburn then had a fight about eighty-miles from the Platte River from Denver, at a place called Fremont's Orchard. Captain Sanburn belonged to the First Colorado. Then at Parks Fort, Kansas, there was quite a fight; then where the Kansas Pacific strikes the Big Sandy River the Indians took 450 head of mules from the railroad company there. This was not much of a fight, as the Indians had taken the mules before the railroad workers knew they were there. This was really not a fight, but a raid. Then there were three fights on Walnut Creek between Fort Hays and Fort Dodge, Kansas.

The Indians burned 600 miles of stage stations that summer, from Liberty Farm, Nebraska, to the Big Sandy in Utah.

This will give you an idea of the work that was ahead for the Forsyth Scouts, with no regular soldiers nearer than the Indian Territory, and all of this country had to be taken care of by the Forsyth Scouts and the frontier settlers, and this is what the fight at Beecher Island put a stop to.

Colonel Mitchell with 1,000 cavalry was then on the Platte. In 1866 after the Fort Phil Kearney, Wyo., massacre, Colonel Mitchell had the record of setting 3,000 miles of prairie on fire. This was done to get rid of the Indians out of this part of the country, as they would then have no feed for their horses and would have to go farther south for the winter, as they were then getting ready to continue their raids in 1868.

There were also several fights at the American Ranch on the South Platte River. I could go on and give column after column of small fights and raids, as the Indians then broke up into small bands and committed all kinds of depredations. It was a continual fight from 1864 to 1868, and two years of this time all the help the scouts had was from the settlers.

To show the people what the Beecher Island people had to contend with will say that the Indians were better armed and better supplied with ammunition than the scouts were, because they had all of the ammunition that they took from the soldiers at Fort Kearney, Wyoming; not a soldier got out alive. This was about 1867, if I remember correctly; they took all of the ammunition and horses that were at the fort. This was done by the Brule and Ogallalah Indians alone. This was the worst massacre that there was among the soldiers. These Brule and Ogallalah Indians were never conquered until they were conquered by General Forsyth and his fifty scouts at Beecher Island.

I consider it would be nothing more than proper that a memorial be created to the honor of General Forsyth, Lieutenant Beecher, Dr. Mooers and the fifty scouts in the states of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska by the people of these three states as I think the people of these three states owe this to these scouts."

Tom Ranahan Dies in 1926 at 87 — Mail Scout and Indian Fighter.

One of the Few Remaining Makers of Early Western History Passes in Local Hospital – Full, Varied Life.

Thomas Ranahan died Monday morning at a local hospital, and Boise lost one of its few remaining human links with its colorful past – the past of pony express, stage coach, bullion to sustain a nation in Civil War, and all the foundings of new civilization in the west.

Aged 87 old Tom Ranahan was the last survivor but one–Henry Dunn of Blackroot–of the old Holliday stage express line.

A full, varied and adventurous life was that of Tom Ranahan. His retentive memory was a storehouse of stirring events closely related to the west, and in the last 10 years, living in retirement in Boise, he has supplied authoritative information on many questions relating to pioneer life and happenings. Last May he directed, for the P.F.E. celebration at Nampa, a re-enactment, true in every detail, of a famous stage robbery of the '60's. This was his last public appearance, except for a talk at the annual Kansas-Idaho society picnic in July. He had planned to attend the General Custer battlefield reunion in Montana last summer, but failed in making transportation arrangement. He had been active, alert and in possession of all his faculties to the last, however. Only for the last two or three months had he been in the hospital, "for a rest," as he told the Capital News.

Born in Ireland, Nov. 28, 1839, Tom was brought to America when two years old by his parents, who settled in Vermont near the Coolidge homestead. They migrated to Kansas in 1855 in a train of 80 families, took up land grants and promoted free state sentiment. In 1860, on attaining his majority, young Tom entered the employ of Ben Holladay as an Overland Stage driver, continuing through countless experiences until 1866 when that line was sold to Wells Fargo."

Chapter II

Story of the Fight by Scout John Hurst

HURST'S story is a gripping tale following that of Ranahan's illustrating the different facts, views and experiences related by a participant. Men see, remember and report the prominent features of a great event. To one a detail rises to the bulk and stature of the dominating event. Another may not have noticed or regarded it of little consequence.

This chapter is of chilling heart, a story of blood curdling zeal, preservation and heroism. Read and ponder when,

"The dark chiefs yelled alarm and swore
The whiteman's blood should flow
And his hewn bones should bleach their plains
Four score years ago.
The still black wilds that sheltered him
No longer was his own."

Scout John Hurst's Story of the Fight.

The Annual Is Very Fortunate in Obtaining the Following Story from Scout Hurst, Now Living in Ogdensburg, N. Y., in Response to a Request for his Version of the Fight.

"My Dear Comrades of the Battle of Beecher Island:

I have been requested to write a letter to help make up your annual, which will contain a brief account of my life just previous to the battle, an account of the battle and my life just after the battle. I must state right here, for the benefit of the general reader, that the battle of Beecher Island was fought September 17, 1868, by General George A. Forsyth and his company of fifty men on one side and a great band of Indians of different tribes, estimated at one thousand on the other side, commanded by the noted Chief Roman Nose of the Sioux tribe.

During the Civil War I enlisted in the First California Volunteer Infantry and served three years. The greater part of that time was spent fighting Indians in Arizona and New Mexico and I was mustered out of service September 30, 1864, at Las Penos, New Mexico, and immediately started across the plains for Kansas by ox train which was returning after unloading their freight at Fort Union. They were glad of our company as the Indians were on the warpath. We arrived at Fort Leavenworth just after the noted Price's raid through Kansas, and went to work for Uncle Sam driving mules, which were then used in hauling supplies to frontier posts, and continued in that business with more or less scrimmages with the Indians. I joined the scouts some time the last of August, 1868, at Fort Harker, Kansas. Love of adventure, which is inherent in all American frontiersmen and becomes kind of a second nature, prompted me to go. If I remember correctly we went to Fort Wallace, with eight days rations and four pack mules which were loaded with the doctor's medicine boxes, axes, shovels and picks. We made a circuitous route as far north as Beaver Creek and followed that up for some distance and then bore south to Fort Wallace, where we rested for a few days. We were hurried away on account of a party of Indians making an attack on a freight train killing two men and running off some stock. The train was encamped between Fort Wallace and Sheridan. Sheridan was about four miles east of Fort Wallace, and at that time was the terminus of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, and all freight going west was hauled there by wagons. As soon as the news of the killing reached Fort Wallace we started in pursuit with six days' rations. We found their trail and followed it up for some time, but soon lost it on account of the Indians scattering, as they generally do, when they do not want to be followed; however, we kept traveling north, as that was the direction the trail went as far as we found it, thinking that we would run onto some trail or Indian, but we saw nothing until we reached the Republican river. After scouting around until the morning of the fourth day we found a small trail running up the river which we followed until evening when we went into camp. The trail continued to grow all the time by other trails leading into it. Next morning we started on the trail, which kept enlarging and soon we discovered the trail of the lodge poles; then we knew that they had their families with them. The lodge poles are strapped on each side of the ponies, one end dragging on the ground and their movables are fastened on the poles behind the ponies. On the fifth day as the trail kept enlarging some of us became somewhat concerned as to the wisdom of following such a large party of Indians, knowing they could not travel very fast with their families and we would therefore soon overtake them, and we knew that they would fight desperately for their families, and our company being so small we would likely get whipped. We made known our anxiety to General Forsyth who asked us "If we did not hire with him to fight Indians?" That ended the matter, but did not convince us as to the wisdom of the course, but we went on in silence until the evening of the fifth day out when we went into camp early on the north side of what we thought was the south branch of the Republican river, but which proved to be Arickaree creek. It was a beautiful place opposite a small island.

Aside from the trail we were following we saw nothing that would indicate there were Indians in the country. A sure sign, say old Indian fighters, that they are planning mischief. Divine Providence, I think, had a hand in our camping there as well as in a great many other incidents connected with the battle, which I will now try to give the reader as I remember it.

I was on guard the night before the battle and Thomas Murphy was my partner. We had, what we call running guard; that is, in place of being on duty two hours and off four, half of us stood the fore part of the night and half the after part. Murphy and I were on duty the forepart. We cooked some beans for the fellows that were to relieve us and had a good square meal to go to sleep on, the last meal we had for nine days. We lay down with our saddles for pillows, and our guns at our sides, and were soon fast asleep, not knowing the danger that threatened us. The next thing we heard was the guards shouting "Indians," and shooting off their guns, which awoke all; we grabbed our guns and got onto our feet in quick time. We could see three or four Indians driving off three or four of our horses that had gotten loose in the night. General Forsyth gave orders to saddle up, which we did, and were standing by our horses waiting further orders when some of the men got permission to drive off some Indians that were hiding behind rocks on the side hill north of us. When they got onto the high ground they shouted to us to look up the creek, and by this time the Indians were in full view, and such a picture! It would be grand to look at it in the moving picture show, but to know that they were after our scalps it was appalling. All were mounted on their war horses, in war costume, with feathers and plumes flying, shouting the war whoop, their horses running at full speed and seeming to have partaken of the spirit of the fray. Was it any wonder that some of our men were overcome by the sight? But there were only three. I sometimes wonder that there were not more, but, thank God, the rest of us measured up to the duty of the hour. There is an old saying "That such things try men's souls," but you must experience them fully to know the meaning. This terrible trial brought out latent heroic qualities which many of our men did not know they possessed, fortitude which enabled them to bring into action all their energies for our defense and protection.

We soon took in the situation and knew that we would be no match for that army of red men, in the open, and as we were close by that small island, before mentioned, which was covered with long grass and scrubby trees, Forsyth gave orders, at the suggestion of John Stillwell, to move on to the island. I do not know how the order affected the other men, but to me it was the most welcome and timely one I had received. We made a grand rush for the island, without order, and tied our horses to the trees. Some ran across to the south side and crouched down in the long grass at the roots of the small trees, and were hardly located when the Indians were charging through us. Comrade Armstrong was close by my right and another comrade on my left, each one by a tree. John Stillwell and his party were on the east end of the island, and Jack Donovan and his party on the west end, and some were in the central part, all pretty well hid, and all shooting when the Indians came in close range. It was a great surprise to our enemies, how we got out of sight so quickly, and our bullets coming from all directions seemed to bewilder them. One of their ponies whose rider had been shot, came among our horses and stayed with them, and was shot down with ours. After many charges and attacks upon us

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they changed their tactics and tried sharpshooting, and when they could not see men to shoot at they shot our horses, and when the last one fell one of them shouted in good English, "There goes their last damned horse."

About this time in the fight our dear Surgeon Mooers was killed, and also Lieutenant Beecher. It was unfortunate that some of our men were located near the horses as it brought them in range of the bullets, coming from a certain direction, that were intended for the horses. Thereby some were killed and many wounded. General Forsyth stood up giving orders until shot down twice. The last order I remember him giving was, "Men, dig holes in the sand and make banks for protection." A warrior coming from the north almost ran over me, and would have but for his horse shying to one side, which saved me. It rather surprised me, as my attention was directed toward the south and did not see him until he was right near me. However, I was glad his horse took him away from me for had he fallen off his horse it would have meant death for one of us; but as he rode straight away from me I had a good chance to shoot, which I improved immediately, and while I did not see him fall I think I must have hit him. My near neighbor, Armstrong, and the other comrade were both wounded in the early part of the battle and ran to the other comrades, which made me feel rather lonely. I was afraid the Indians would get between me and the other men. There was much shooting on the east end, and I thought it was the Indians, as I did not know then that Stillwell and his men were there. I kept close watch that way and soon saw an Indian creeping through the grass towards our horses, then I felt sure that the much shooting was by the Indians and they were closing in on us. The idea proved to be erroneous, but I am giving the reader my impressions and this conviction was burned into my memory, never to be forgotten. I thought then we would all be scalped, and I think this belief was quite general with all the comrades. General Forsyth called out and wanted to know if anyone could pray, for he said, "We are beyond human aid, and if God does not help us there is no help for us." But no one responded. I have thought since in the light of subsequent events what an awe-inspiring thing it would have been to the Indians if a man of God had broken out in loud appeal to the Great Spirit for help. This thought came from the answer that the wife of Roman Nose made when taken prisoner about a year after, and asked why they did not rush in and kill all? "Oh," she said, "We thought the Great Spirit was protecting you and we were afraid." Divine Providence again! Well, I did not want to be scalped out there on the island alone, so fired at the Indian that I saw creeping through the grass and without waiting to see the effect of my shot, jumped up and ran to where some of the comrades were located. Some had dug holes and made banks of sand around them, and some were using the dead horses for protection, and so I dropped down beside an unoccupied dead horse and went to digging with my hands and throwing up the sand. Digging was easy when we got through the grass roots and I soon had a place large enough to sit up in. While I was busy digging, Comrades McCall and Culver came in and got down beside another dead horse and went to work digging. They had not been there but a short time when the comrades on the inside of the circle shouted, "If you fellows on the outside don't get up and shoot the Indians will be charging us." McCall and Culver got up to look for Indians to shoot, and some sharpshooter fired at the exposed heads. The bullet grazed McCall's neck, stunning him for a short time, and hit Culver in the head, killing him. That was the last exposure of heads made during the fight.

About this time in the fight Comrade Harrington came in covered with blood from head to foot, and with the head of an arrow sticking in the top of his head. One of the comrades tried to pull it out but could not, but strange to say a bullet knocked it out during the fight. Comrade Burke then came in and dug a hole near by us and kept digging until he came to water. He filled his canteen and passed it over to the next, and so on until it was emptied and passed back again and refilled, which was done many times until all in reach had been supplied. Water at that time was a boon to us, especially to the wounded, who had become feverish and very thirsty. Burke then told us his experience. Somehow, he did not get onto the island with the rest of us and during the fight he saw an Indian some distance away, too far, he thought, to make sure of him, but as there was a hummock between him and the Indian, he thought he would crawl to it and then he would be sure to hit the Indian. He crawled along until he reached the hummock, and raising himself almost bumped noses with the Indian, and it so surprised him that he did not think where he was. He punched his gun at him and shouted, "Booh," and ran for us. He said he thought the Indian ran the other way, as he did not hear him shoot.

Well, we were in a pretty hard place, not knowing how soon we would be scalped, but the way that droll Irishman told his story made us laugh.

The next excitement we had was the white flag held up by the Indians. We had quite a controversy over the question of recognizing it, and concluded it would not do to trust them as they might take advantage of the armistice and rush our lines, but it might have been all right for there were two of their warriors killed so close to our lines that they did not dare attempt to get them away, and as they hated to have their dead fall into the hands of the enemy they might have taken that way to get them, but at that time we did not know there were any of their dead near us. These two warriors had been shot by Louis Farley as he lay on the north side of the stream with a broken leg. They were in full view of him as they crept along a ridge of sand made by the water where it divided to go around the island. Both were shot through the head, and each had a rifle and bow and quiver full of arrows. The killing of these two warriors had an intimidating effect on the rest and so stopped that mode of warfare. I believe that it was Divine Providence that Louis Farley did not get onto the island with the rest of us.

After the white flag incident the fight was renewed with sharpshooting, but no more charging across the island. The songs of their women, which in the early part of the fight were joyful and exultant, expecting victory, were changed to sorrow and lamentations for the loss of their fathers, brothers and husbands. Night came at length as a welcome shadow to hide us more securely from our enemies and enable us to care for our wounded comrades. It was a dark, rainy night, and our first work was to get the wounded all in and dig a place for them; the next was to get the saddle blankets and make as good beds for them as the material would allow. We dug a large square hole, which we called the hospital, and placed all the wounded in there. We then secured the cartridges which were in our saddlebags, and cut the hams of our horses and hung them on the limbs of the trees to dry, for that was all we had to live on until we got relief. In that climate beef hung up in the open air would soon dry so that the flies could not harm it and would keep indefinitely. Next we dug trenches connecting all the rifle pits. General Forsyth called a counsel to determine what was to be done. Our guide was Sharp Grover, and General Forsyth inquired of him the prospects of sending men through the Indians' lines to Fort Wallace for reinforcements, a distance of about one hundred miles. Grover said it was impossible to get through and went on to tell how the Indians did in such cases. We all stood there listening to the dark picture he was painting and when he got through John Stillwell spoke up and said, "If I can get someone to go with me, I will run the risk." A comrade by the name of Pierre Trudeau said, "I will go with you, John." General Forsyth wrote a dispatch to Colonel Bankhead, commanding officer at Fort Wallace, and then turning to Grover wanted to know if wagons could be brought directly across the country from Fort Wallace to us. Grover told him that the country was so rough it would be impossible, and Stillwell was directed to come by way of Custer's Trail, which ran directly north from Fort Wallace to the Republican river, and then follow the river to us, which made a distance of about one hundred and thirty miles. This accounts for Stillwell's being so long on the road. Sharp Grover was the man who should have volunteered to go but he was afraid to risk it, and the description he gave of the country was all wrong for we returned to Fort Wallace, with all our wagons, straight across the country. We expected to get relief in about six days, and when our scouts left us we just settled down to business for we did not know what the Indians might do before morning, so kept diligent watch all through the long night.

The next day was a day of watching, no fighting, but some shots by sharpshooters, and when night came General Forsyth thought it wise to send two more scouts to Fort Wallace, not knowing whether the others would get through or not. Two men volunteered, but I do not remember their names; they could not get through and came back. We watched another night and another day and when the third night covered us with its mantle, Forsyth called for two men to go to Fort Wallace. Jack Donovan and Captain Pliley started with directions to come back straight across the country with a few soldiers and an ambulance, doctors and such supplies as we needed. Their experience has been told in other articles and I will not attempt to give them here further than to say that after many privations in the way of sore feet, hunger and thirst, they succeeded in getting through. Donovan started back the next day with the ambulance and a few soldiers. Pliley was so used up that he could not travel.

While the scouts were making their way to Fort Wallace we were having a serious time on the island. The Indians left us after the fifth day, and some of the comrades were prompted to advise saving our lives by attempting to strike out for Fort Wallace and leaving the wounded to their fate, thinking the scouts had never reached their destination. When the talk of abandoning the wounded came to General Forsyth he called us together and made a nice address. It was very touching and soldier-like, so much so that I never heard another word about leaving the wounded.

Our dried meat gave out in six days, and we had nothing then but our horses that had been dead six days, and when we would cut into the meat we found it had green streaks through it and was fast decaying. The only thing we could do was to sprinkle it with powder while it was cooking, which partially took away the bad odor, but we could only eat it when we were starving. We had no salt and our systems were crying for it. One of the men found a small piece of pork rind in his haversack and chewed it until he thought he had all the good out of it and spit it out; when another comrade took it up and chewed it for a while and spit it out, and then I took it up and thought it tasted delicious on account of the salt. On the eighth day we made quite a march around the camp and found a prairie dog town, but none of them came in sight, and I made up my mind that I would come up in the morning and try to capture a dog. The next morning being the ninth day, I went out to the dog town and watched it for quite a while but no dog came out. I had kept up pretty well until this time, but I began to think I would starve to death, and was having the blues pretty bad when I started back for camp. I had not gotten far when I saw some of my comrades running towards me and motioning me to come to them, and the thought that Indians were coming took possession of me and I started to run as fast as I could, but soon got tired and thought I might as well die fighting, and turned around and sank down on the ground and saw three horsemen coming directly toward me, but I thought they did not look like Indians, and the closer they came the more they looked like white men. It proved to be Jack Donovan with a relief party. Well, I never was so glad to see the face of a friend before or since, and the sudden transition from despair to safety was too much for me and I wept like a child. We had great rejoicing in camp that day when the relief party came to us, for Donovan had run onto Colonel Carpenter on his way back and brought him directions from Fort Wallace to go to the relief of Forsyth. The poor wounded comrades got the medical aid they needed so much, but one of them was too far gone. Louis Farley, the old hero, died after his leg had been taken off. If I remember correctly, we stayed three days after the relief party came before we started for Fort Wallace. Stillwell arrived next day after Donovan so we had a great company to escort us back.

On the first day's march home our advance guards came onto two Indians, one riding a pony and the other walking. The walking one saw us first and shouted to his pal; when he saw our men so close to him he whipped up the pony and got away; our men got the one that was on foot. We found thirteen fresh graves on scaffolds on the first stream of the Arickaree. In due time we arrived at Fort Wallace, where we were received joyfully, and had the freedom of the fort. General Sheridan issued an order to give any of Forsyth's men any position they were qualified to fill in the quartermaster's department. In a few days I went to Fort Harker and secured the position of wagon master and hauled goods and camp supplies all winter while Custer was operating further south. I ran this train for two years, until 1870, when I went into the police force in Hays City, where I was ambushed and shot by a man named George Clinton and have been a cripple ever since. Clinton was caught and hung by the Vigilantes. I was taken to Fort Hays hospital when shot, and I was treated by Dr. Delano (the army surgeon) for three months. As soon as I was able to travel I came home here to Ogdensburg, N. Y., and lived here until 1873, when I went to Renville county, Minnesota. I married an old school mate, and lived here until 1881, when I moved with my family back to Minnesota on my old homestead, where I lived until 1900, when we came back here, and here I expect to live until I hear the last call. I am seventy years old and with the infirmities caused by my wound I am pretty well used up.

And now, my dear comrades, and all who read these lines, I wish to add a few words to what I have already written, about God having a hand in the battle of the Arickaree. At the time of the battle I was like Samuel, the judge in Israel, when a boy. I did not know the Lord, but the Lord knew me and knew that I would believe and be saved, as I hope He knew a great many more of my comrades would believe and be saved, therefore He interposed and saved us from the Indians.

And now, my dear comrades, while I would love to meet with you and all the good people who meet there to commemorate the battle, circumstances will not permit, and while we may never meet again on earth, I hope through the atoning merits of Jesus Christ to meet you all where parting will be no more."

Your old comrade,

JOHN HURST.

Chapter III

Story of the Fight by Scout Schlesinger

THIS story is a classic and distinctly rhetorical, as described of the gastric features of the Beecher battle glossed over bv his pure English. As we read of his gulping horse meat, the writer wonders if there had been pork chops or spare ribs, would he have been tempted. The writer once knew an itinerant Schlesinger, who claimed and exercised mystic right, they were long distant facts. At his request, with no suggestion of coin, I permitted him to state my past and future. From some basis to me unknown he guessed my past and interpreted it in a very flattering way. He may have inquired of one of my friends, but as most of my then future has become a large portion of my now past, his then forecast was filled with errors.

In any event, or view, Chapter Three is well told. Our author's plan in laying foundation for his book was quite successful in obtaining most reliable and entertaining secondary evidence, and with reliance thereon he proceeds in further chapters to mingle his own experience, observation and well digested information from credible sources.

Schlesinger Story

"To relate my experiences while a member of Forsyth's Scouts during the fight with Indians on Beecher Island in September, 1868, I am obliged to refer to the tablets of memory which Father Time may have somewhat obliterated and if my recital should seem contradictory in some respects it must be attributed to this fact.

In the summer of 1868, I was entirely out of funds, living on hard-tack and coffee most of the time, going from camp to camp looking for something to turn up, but no chance for employment came. About this time Colonel Forsyth was organizing a company of frontier men to scout for Indian warfare, I eagerly sought an engagement, and succeeded through the influence of C. W. Parr, post scout at Fort Hays. His interest in my obtaining membership in the command was due to the fact that the pay of scouts who had their own horses was to be $75.00 a month, and those who drew horses from the government were to receive $50.00. Parr loaned several of his own horses to a few of the men, myself among these, for which he drew $25.00 per month of our pay.

Although I had no military experience I was fairly well inured to prairie life, acquired by my two years of knock-about on the frontier, so that the prospect of this campaign did not deter me from entering cheerfully upon the expected adventure, perhaps because I did not know what was coming. When Forsyth's command left Fort Hays for the scout of the country, we started in a northwesterly direction, Lieutenant Beecher acting as guide. We traveled all day, except a short rest for lunch, and did not go into camp until we reached the Salina river, late that night. I will never forget this first day's ride! I was not used to the saddle; my equipment, consisting of carbine, revolvers, saddle bags, roll of blankets, etc., were always where they should not have been. I could not adjust them so they would be comfortable; my horse would not stay with the column, but forged ahead being a fast walker, causing me to be ordered back into line several times. My bridle arm became stiff and lame in the effort to obey; every bone in my body began to ache; the ride and the day never seemed to end, and with every mile of travel my misery was bordering on torture. I was chafed by the saddle and some parts became swollen to twice their normal size; my gun would never stay in place, and, to add to my troubles, my clothes became wet from a drizzling rain, making the skin tender where belts attempted to hold the equipment in place. At last we reached camp. I was too exhausted to enjoy my supper, and to cap the climax and fill my cup of misery to the brim, I was detailed for guard duty. But human nature could stand the strain no longer; the old saying in ordinary phrase, "I'm tired to death" proved a literal exemplification in my case. I was directed to my post, but no sooner left to myself than I dropped to the ground and fell asleep. If there had been thousands of

Indians around us, my physical condition could not have prevented them exercising their vocation, and I can solemnly declare that I was not disturbed by anybody all night in an attempt to relieve me, and the suspicion still abides that all the rest of our comrades must have had troubles of their own. But it did not take many days for everybody, myself included, to become hardened and fit to meet emergencies incidental to life on the prairie.

After being out about a week we rode in a southerly direction towards Fort Wallace without any incident. Those of us that may have been apprehensive about the danger of meeting Indians became reassured, and the scout assumed the nature of a pleasure outing.

One day were were descending into a valley, traveling in an irregular formation, Indian fashion, when we beheld in the bottoms a camp of hay-makers. They were spread out in the valley at their work. When they discovered us they took us for Indians, as they had no idea that white men in such numbers were within miles of their camp. We watched them hasten to their camp and make ready to corral their stock. Colonel Forsyth at once ordered two or three of our men to hasten forward to inform them of our identity. The man in charge was Charley Christy, known to many of our company. Their pleasure was great to have us as guests, and we, too, were glad to partake of their hospitality. When we left this camp we had to ascend the hill. As we proceeded we noticed heads of men peering from behind the brow of the hill. We suspected them to be Indians. At an order from Colonel Forsyth we at once charged up the hill at a gallop. When we reached the top we found some haymakers returning from Wallace. They were ready, corralled to receive the supposed Indians. In our charge, one of our men was thrown by his horse and was injured to an extent that he had to have medical attention when we reached Fort Wallace and could not join the command when we were ready to take the trail again.

When we left Fort Wallace, refreshed and provisioned, it was under orders to relieve a Mexican train at Sheridan that had been attacked by Indians. Two men joined our company — Jim Curry, whose name does not appear anywhere as a member of Forsyth's Scouts or as a participant in the battle at Beecher

Island, but he was with us, of that I am sure, for I was well acquainted with him and knew him better than anyone else. The other was Jack Grover Sharp, who assumed the position of guide for the command. He just had recovered from wounds received from Indians in an encounter in which Bill Comstock, the noted scout, and he had participated, and in which Comstock was killed.

How we left Fort Wallace and arrived at the scene of the attack on the Mexican train; how we took the trail and incidents leading up to and reminiscences of the battle of Beecher Island, I have already described in a letter to Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady, which he published in his book, "Indian Fights and Fighters." When I looked at the two dead Mexicans at Sheridan, killed in an engagement, looking death in the face, my mind seemed as on the brink of the infinite, and to still the flutter of the heart required the greatest self-control. Our enterprise included such possibilities, however, and I determined to do my best regardless of what might happen.

Lieutenant Beecker, Sharpe Grover, General McCall, Jack Stillwell and others, at once chose this Island to be our best position to give battle. It was so situated that we were far enough removed from the zone of gun fire directed from surrounding hills. To reach us the Indians had to come down nearer to our level, and here the sandy bottom proved our protection.

As we had expected, just about daybreak the plain to west was literally covered with Indians, forming leisurely for attack. It appeared as if they were sure of their prey, judging from the fact that they had their squaws and papooses with them, a circumstance unusual with Indians on the warpath. They placed them upon the north hill where they could watch the battle and enjoy the expected fun, and perhaps run in to participate in the finish. This contingent manifested their presence by chanting, singing and other expressions of encouragement to their brave bucks. This was at the beginning of the battle, but as the fighting progressed the scouts stubbornly refused to ratify the program of extermination; on the contrary, when they delivered the blow with most telling effect, even if they were outnumbered twenty to one; when their terrific gun play mowed down the braves of the assailants, then the tone on the hill changed to wailing and lamentations. Human nature is the same in effect on the heart, be the outer coloring white or red. The sight of slaughter of our dear ones is grievous.

We were placed in position, lying flat on the ground, our horses tied to the brush in our center. The Indians, after showing off in massed formation, began circling around us, displaying splendid horsemanship. Soon thereafter they charged, and kept up those tactics all day. With every repulse they seemed to gather new acquisitions and strength. The fighting began to tell on us. Every once in a while the cry went up that this one, or that one, was hit, and that Wilson, and later Culver, was killed. Our horses were being killed in rapid succession. The fierce attacks and repulses kept on. In the beginning of the battle we began to dig in the sand, scraping holes with our hands, kicking our toes while fighting, eventually we dug trenches deep enough to afford partial protection from Indian bullets that poured into our camp like hail.

The first day's battle ended by the Indians withdrawing overnight. Our toll of the day was two men dead, two men mortally wounded and twenty, more or less, wounded, and all our horses killed. Next day was a repetition of the first, with the difference that there were fewer casualties among our men, due to the fact that we worked nearly all night to strengthen our trenches.

For four days the Indians kept charging in every conceivable way and from every direction only to suffer repulses, until finally they realized the futility of trying to capture our position. They withdrew on the fifth day, leaving us more exhausted than they suspected, for we had no food other than meat cut from our horses, and this supply soon became putrid, yet we had to subsist on this ration for nine days. It became worse from day to day. The dead horses lying in the sun became softer, and oh, the stench! At last relief came, summoned by our four men, who were dispatched by Colonel Forsyth. They stole out of our camp at night and could only travel afoot at night to Fort Wallace. Forty-five out of fifty men composing Forsyth's command, of which number about half were wholly disabled or more or less wounded, were fortunate to be rescued from a siege, the parallel of which there are few, if any, to equal, according to the records in the annals of border Indian warfare, considered from a standpoint of men engaged — fifty scouts against an estimate of about a thousand Indians, both sides about equally armed.

I have often been asked whether I have killed any Indians, to which my answer must truthfully be that I don't know. The conditions were such, speaking for myself, that I did not consider it safe to watch the results of a shot, the Indians being all around us, shooting at anything moving above ground. At one time I threw a hat full of sand that I had scraped up in my pit to the top of the excavation, exposing myself more than usual, when a hail of bullets struck my hill of sand, almost blinding me! This will explain why I did not look for results!

My plan of observation was to work the barrel of my carbine, saw fashion, through the sand from the edges on the top of my hole downward, obtaining by these means a sort of loophole through which I could see quite a distance; also taking a general observation by suddenly jumping up and as quickly dropping back into my hole, which enabled me to take a shot, or as many as the size of the target warranted, without undue exposure and yet be in touch with the general situation. In such instances I have seen Indians crawl behind a knoll and saw several times two horsemen drag a body away between them. Indians boys came from behind a knoll shooting arrows at us. I saw bodies of Indians both on foot and horseback, coming toward us. These I considered good targets.

Only in one instance do I suspect of having done personal execution. In the south channel of the then dry creek was a tree trunk, evidently floated thereby a flood. From this stump came many shots, to the annoyance of Lou McLaughlin and myself. McLaughlin was wounded and hors de combat for the moment. I employed my tactics of suddenly going up in the air and firing at the stump. After several shots the sniping from that direction ceased. I have also seen an Indian, evidently a chief, standing on a high elevation a little south by west of our position, talking loudly and giving commands. He was in sight of all of us. Grover, who was in the next pit east of ours, and next to Colonel Forsyth, interpreted to us the chief's orders, stating that he wanted his young bucks to persist in charging, as we had only a handful of cartridges, etc. Grover yelled back at the chief telling him in his language to "send on the bucks; that we each have a hat full, which we will give them." I have no idea who the chief was, nor do I remember hearing anybody mention names. I did not know who was in command of the hostiles, and therefore was unaware when a chieftain fell.

Owing to the fact that I considered it dangerous to remain long above ground at any one time, I was not in position to observe the behavior or doings of our men during action, so after our rescue and return to Wallace I was surprised to learn that there was one among us who did not do his duty and that Lane was discharged for cause. There was a peculiar incident connected with Lane in his pit. During the first day of the fight, a mule with a partial pack on his back got loose and wandered around the vicinity of our pits; he had several arrows sticking in his body and seemed wounded otherwise, which caused him to rear and pitch to such an extent that Jim Lane, my neighbor and I, decided to kill him. Upon being shot, he fell and lay between us. He served a double purpose as a barricade and food. Two or three days later when Jim was cutting meat off the mule he must have cut deeper than he intended, for he cut an intestine and received its full contents over himself, nearly filling his pit! This was one of the humorous incidents, but of course not to poor Jim, judging from the blue streaks in the air around him.

When the Indians left our vicinity after the fifth day of fighting we improved the opportunity to leaves our trenches and look around the neighborhood in search of some change of diet from the rotting horse meat on which we had subsisted so long, and which began to tell on our bowels.

One day while searching for prickly pears, about half a dozen of us were climbing the hill to the north, and while about half way up to the summit we were startled by the sudden appearance of an Indian on horseback riding leisurely down the hill toward us. We perceived each other simultaneously. Only for a moment we looked at each other. He seemed as surprised as we. Like a flash he turned, and lying low on his pony, he whipped him to his utmost speed and soon was out of sight. When we first caught sight of him, he was no more than about fifty yards from the nearest of us. As soon as we recovered from our surprise, we began to shoot at the vanishing rider. Each of us fired at least twice, but strange as it may seem, he got away and if he was hit at all we never knew it, for when we got to the top of the hill there was no sign of an Indian in sight. We did not dare to go too far from camp, therefore did not hunt and there was no game in the vicinity outside of a coyote killed during one night, that had prowled and howled around our camp, attracted by our dead horses. We had nothing else but putrid horse meat for food, and would have been glad to feast on coyotes, as bad as their meat tasted, but they only appeared at night, and while we shot in the direction from where the howls came from, we were not lucky to make a hit, so we had no alternative but to continue cutting meat from the horses for our food supply, even if their condition was nauseating, until the ninth day when Colonel Carpenter came to our relief, augmented by Colonel Bankhead the next day.

This most momentous event in the career of Forsyth's scouts I have described in my letter to Rev. Brady, only those that have faced death in a desperate cause can appreciate such a rescue and the joy of a new lease on life. The rescuers delighted in feeding us with the best they had, and their kindness continued all the way back to the fort, which journey we undertook as soon as our wounded were made comfortable for the trip over the rough prairie without roads. Some of us were given mules to ride and the rest rode in wagons.

The first day's travel we reached the Republican river. Clark and I were flanking on the left and reached the river a little ahead of the main column. There forming a flat plateau of about 75 to 100 yards before reaching the river bed. Here we camped for the night. Before Clark and I descended to the bottom we looked around and saw four Indians running towards three horses. Three of them jumped on the horses and in great agitation galloped away through the water to the other side of the river and kept on to the south as fast as their ponies could carry them, leaving their companion behind, who ran after them, but of course could not overtake them. Before the three Indians had crossed the river, we noticed two or three of our company who were flanking on the right hasten down to the bottom towards the Indians, so that we two lost sight of him, and when we got there we could not get near for the crowd. I heard that he defended himself bravely before he died, and that it was because his revolver missed fire that none of our men were hurt. Here also we found an Indian burying ground, which the four Indians evidently were guarding. There was one mound composed of stones piled up around a body and this was covered with a buffalo hide. When this was removed another such layer was revealed, but I could see no more, being crowded aside. Then there was about six or eight scaffolds composed of four poles stuck in the ground and a buffalo hide stretched across to each pole, on top whereon, lay a corpse fully dressed and wrapped in blankets. All the bodies were pulled down from their lofty perches. This may seem like a wanton sacrilege, but not to those who have suffered bodily torture and mental anguish from these very cruel savages. I had no scruples to roll one out of his blankets, that were still soaked in the blood from the wounds evidently that had caused his death, and appropriated the top one that was least wet. This Indian had on a head-dress composed of buckskin, beautifully beaded and ornamented, with a polished buffalo horn on the frontal part and eagle feathers down the back. When I took this off maggots were on the head piece. I also pulled off his earrings and finger rings which were of tin. He was so far decomposed that when I told hold of the rings the fingers came along, and these I shook out! I also got his beaded knife, scabbard and other trinkets. The blanket, one earring and scabbard are still in my possession, but I had great trouble in carrying these things away, owing to the awful stench. No one would tolerate me near him. When I mounted I tied the bundle to the saddle girt under the mule's body, and when I rode in a wagon I tied it to the axle, but in spite of these expediences I had to put up with remonstrances until we finally reached Fort Wallace, where I immediately soaked my trophies in a creek, weighing them down with stones. At Wallace we naturally were objects of interest to the populace and our souvenirs no less so. My Indian head dress was an especial curiosity. Jack Donovan interceded for one of the officers and offered me $50.00 for the head dress, but I refused to part with it. Next morning it was missing from my tent.

We remained at Fort Wallace for some time. Colonel Forsyth with our other wounded were in the Hospital doing well, we were told. A good many members of our company resigned from the command and new recruits were taken in to fill the original quota. Lieutenant Papoon taking command of the re-organized scouts. I remained with this command and was on two more scouts with them. Nothing of importance happened, so I resigned, and at the earnest solicitation of my family returned to my former home in New York City, and later moved to Cleveland, Ohio where I engaged in the cigar and tobacco business.

My experience on the plains furnished a theme of many tales to the edification of my friends, and on several occasions incidents recalling my adventure presented themselves by contact with former participants of either direct or indirect frontier life. One incident in particular will no doubt be of interest. Wm. F. Cody, who had obtained the soubriquet of "Buffalo Bill" since I had known him at Hays, and who sometimes called on me in my place of business when in Cleveland, gave a performance in the open for the first time on the show grounds. He had two camps, one for white performers, and one for the Indians. Thinking that perhaps I might meet someone in the white camp whom I may have known on the plains, I took a stroll in that direction. I came across one who seemed a typical frontiersman. I said to him: "Beg pardon, did you live in Kansas in 1868, and if so, do you know any of Forsyth's Scouts?" "Yes," he said, "I was at Forsyth's rescue." His name was John Nelson. This information made him an object of great interest to me. I inquired about some of my former comrades and acquaintances, and after a mutually pleasant visit he invited me to go with him to the Indian camp. Arriving there, he entered a tepee and asked me to walk in. Sitting on a buffalo robe on the ground was an old squaw surrounded by papooses. She was his wife. He said something to her in the Indian tongue, whereupon she looked up at me, grunted, started up towards me and grabbed my hands. Although the manifestation seemed friendly, I got scared. She kept up her chatter in her language. I asked him what all this meant. He answered, "She is glad to see you, for she was on the north hill watching your fight with her people." He acted as interpreter, for she would not talk English, although she understood it. I invited them to come downtown next day after the performance. When they came, a bunch of them, my store was a place of curiosity to a crowd on the sidewalk. While at my place the squaw and her husband had some conversation, at the conclusion of which he turned to me and asked me to do him a favor, which was to tell his wife who it was of Forsyth's scouts that wore a buckskin shirt. I reflected a moment and remembered that Jack Stillwell brought such a garment to camp before we started from Fort Hays. I helped him hem a seam around the collar. I informed Nelson that Jack Stillwell wore such a shirt, wondering what the inquiry meant and asked the reason thereof. He replied, "Do you remember the three dead Indians your people scalped on the edge of the Island? One of them was a relative of my wife. All these years my wife and her people have been under the impression that I was with you during the fight, and accuse me because I happened to be there with the rescue party; and because I usually wore a buckskin shirt that was conclusive evidence that I was the guilty one. It would please me so much," he continued, "if you would testify to my innocence," or words to that effect. Of course, I cheerfully gave testimony without any compunction and expressed the hope that such little matters might cease to cause a bone of contention between two loving hearts. This was a sensational episode in which I was a corroborative participant in the establishment of connubial felicity, after a lapse of about a quarter of a century. I was in correspondence with Jack Stillwell and in my next letter told him of the incident. His reply was, "If you have a chance, tell John Nelson to handle the truth more carefully for I know him well." I never had the chance."

S. Schlesinger.

Beecher Island Scout Is Dead.

Sigmund Schlesinger, 78 years old, and next to the last surviving scout of the Beecher Island battle, died at a Cleveland, Ohio, hospital April 20th, 1929, according to word received by Robert Lyman of Wray this week.

Funeral services were held at Cleveland last Sunday; J. J. Peate of Beverly, Kansas, the first of the rescuing party to reach the scene of the battle, attended the funeral.

Of the handful of scouts that repulsed the Indian attacks at the Beecher Island encounter, only one now remains — Tom Murphy of Kansas.

During the years that have passed since the battle, memory and the stories told by the survivors of the fight have built a wealth of tradition around the spot on the Arickaree creek where the battle was fought. The place is now a state park, with a monument and the new auditorium to help preserve the traditions of the battle. With the passing of the scouts, the preservation of the legends of the Island is left to the people of this community, who have heard these scouts tell the story of their adventure.

Mr. Schlesinger was known to many people of this community, having attended a number of the celebrations which are held yearly at Beecher Island. Forsyth in his story refers to him as the "Little Jew." The commander spoke very highly of him while under his command, and all through life he proved to be not only a good soldier but a good American citizen.

Another one that helped to make history has gone to his reward.

Chapter IV

Beecher Island Memorial Association, Its Organization and Dedication of the Monument

IN WRITING chapter four, the author took utmost pain in presenting only reliable material on which both contemporaries and posterity can rely and depend. But these records may be confined to the perusal of not many, or if available, time and opportunity may not suffice. Civilization establishes landmarks, writes books, containing events, laws, policies, society and religion. But the human mind has not been satisfied with these. The landmarks along the winding paths of civilization have been attempts in the erection of shrines, temples and memorials. Thirty years after the close of the Indian Wars in this locality regarding that period arbitrarily as the passage of one generation, the citizens of Wray, Colo. with others were foremost in taking steps of procedure and ways and means for accomplishment, conceived the establishment of the suitable memorial for those who participated in the defense of homes, lives and right of progress in this area concerning which he has written.

Many of those active in the Beecher Island battles and others had changed residence to other scenes and some had made that change which shall be changeless. The author's view of this memorial was that it should be enduring and of domestic, educational, financial and patriotic character. It should be useful, ornamental and instructive.

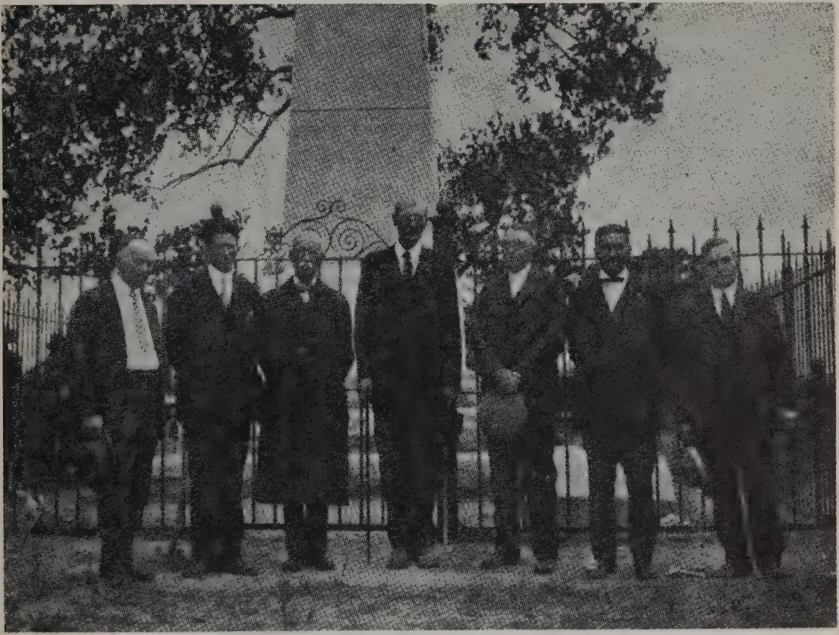
Great and united efforts were made and with opportune changes the movement grew and waxed strong, with accretions from patriotic citizens, counties and states, until it stood as the speaking reminder of commanding facts in an important era.

It stood as one of the creditable memorials of this national section.

Some years ago the writer was asked for a terse expressive statement for the face of a similar statue, and this was the response carved in the face of enduring granite:

"An Appeal To Memory; A Challenge To Oblivion."

That Southwestern memorial was expected to be a shrine for the generations as they might come and go, following or meeting America's sun, until perhaps time should be no more.



Beecher Island Monument erected and dedicated in 1905 to commemorate the Beecher Island fight and its results, made possible by appropriations by the States of Kansas and Colorado.

The Beecher Island Battle Memorial Association.

This association was incorporated under the laws of the state of Colorado, on the 7th day of August, 1903, "to perpetuate the names and keep alive the memory of a noble band of scouts and frontiersmen by the erection of suitable monuments and the holding of an annual reunion upon the site of the battle."

The original circumstance leading up to this organization took place in the office of J. J. Peate, in Beverly, Kansas. Thirty years had passed and not one of the men who struggled there had ever been on the ground since. Not a person, if we except the surviving scouts themselves, could designate the exact location, and the movement to mark the place came about by the chance suggestion of Peate to Chalmers Smith one day when the latter called at Peate's place of business. It was the anniversary month, and Peate recalled to his friend that thirty years before, on the 17th, Smith was out there on the island, and he further suggested that the two ought to write to H. H. Tucker and ask him to come over from his home in Oklahoma, and that the three together should make a pilgrimage to the old battle ground. Peate then wrote to Tucker, who gladly accepted the invitation, and on the evening of the 14th the trio boarded the railway train at Beverly, and next morning were at Goodland, in Sherman county, Kansas, from which point the rest of their journey of sixty miles was by private conveyance. At midday on the 16th they reached the Arickaree and halted at Mr. Thompson's, where they began making inquiries for the spot of earth that was dear to their memory. They were not long in finding out that local tradition pointed out at least two localities as the scene of the fighting. Meeting Frank Reecks, from him they learned that he and his brother Charles had settled one and a half miles southwest of Beecher Island ten years after the battle. They spent the afternoon in looking over the ground, and that night were entertained by Mr. Reecks and his wife.

On the morning of the 17th — just thirty years almost from the hour that the embattled Indians swept down from the western ridge upon the scouts with yells and furious speed — these men repaired to the famous field under totally reversed conditions, to leave authentic marks of the actual locality where brave blood was freely shed to secure this change of environment. These three expected nevermore to visit the scene again, and so they went about making arrangements to mark this place of heroism so as to settle forever all doubt and controversy concerning the true location. A neighboring settler and his wife, by name of Ewing, came along, and when it was stated that these strangers wanted to get some stones to make a cairn, he cheerfully consented to go with them to the farther side of Old Squaw Hill and haul as many as they wanted. This being done, when the scouts were putting them in position, he spoke up and said they ought to have an inscription. Mr. Thompson, who was present, offered to give them a stone with a smooth surface which, he said, was down at his house. This they brought, and Peate traced the letters with a pencil and he and Smith engraved them with their pocket knives, producing these words: "Battle of Beecher Island, fought September 17, 1868." This memorial tablet stands now at the base of the monument and is an interesting feature of the permanent landmarks to be seen there.

This incident, when it became known, awakened a lively sentiment in the public mind, and out of it grew plans for action. In 1899, the next year after the visit of the three old scouts to the place, the first regular reunion of veteran soldiers was held here, and it was at this time that Major William R. Hays offered a resolution at a joint public meeting of Wray and Vernon Posts, G.A.R., which was adopted, providing for annual reunions at this place, with the double object of establishing a park for historic commemoration of the battle and the erection of a suitable and imperishable monument to the memory of the scouts who fought, as well as for reunions of soldiers of the Civil war, their families and friends. H. H. Coston, William R. Hays, and William Thompson led the movement for the erection of a monument, and then followed the organization of the Beecher Island Memorial and Park Association, which was incorporated in 1899 by William R. Hays of Denver, who was elected president; Joseph A. Miller of Vernon, secretary; Marshall S. Crawford of Denver, treasurer; and Edward S. Bateman of Vernon and Charles Christy of Denver, all of whom composed the board of directors. These directors erected a small wooden monument at a cost of about one hundred dollars, and so much being accomplished, this stood as a mark of a definite purpose to rear finally what was broadly cherished, a granite column. The difficulties that had to be overcome were considerable — far more discouraging than the mere casual observer would suspect — but the cause appealed to the public-spirited, who were liberal in their encouragement, while the comrades who had undertaken the movement were patient and hopeful and took courage from the little though steady progress that was made.

In 1900 and again in 1901 reunions were held on the grounds under the management of the association. By the time of the latter gathering an influence had developed in favor of reorganizing and localizing the association, due to the fact that the officers were too distantly scattered for efficiency in promoting the objects for which the association had been formed. Consequently, in obedience to the general desire, the Memorial and Park Association was superseded by a new body, the present one, named The Beecher Island Battle Memorial Association, and the following persons were the first directors: F. A. Greatsinger and Charles Barber, Lansing; Harry Strangeway, J. P. Speirs, E. D. Bullard, J. W. Ellis and Robert Lynam, Wray; F. M. Boatman, Dr. J. J. Henry and E. S. Bateman, Vernon; F. H. Furneaus, Fox, Colo.; and James Drommond, Haigler, Nebr.

In 1902, Representative John F. Shafroth introduced a bill in the lower house of Congress to grant to this association the part of the battlefield comprising 120 acres, described as follows: N.E.¼ N.E.¼ and N.W.¼ N.E.¼ and S.W.¼ N.E.¼ Section 21, Township 2 South, Range 43 West, 6th P.M. His successor, the Hon. Robert Bonynge, also exerted himself in behalf of the measure and secured its passage, and Senator Henry M. Teller successfully championed it in the upper house. Another tract of 120 acres, upon which was a part of the battle ground, was held by the State of Colorado, and it was thought that a grant of this would be an appropriate act of generosity that could not well be denied, and accordingly, in 1903, the Hon. O. C. Zingg, a member of the legislature from this district, introduced a bill in the lower branch of that body to convey the S.E.¼ N.E.¼ and the

N.E.¼ S.E.¼ Section 21, and the S.W.¼ N.W.¼ Section 22, Township 2 South, Range 43 West, 6th P.M., to this association. Senator Hill introduced the measure in the upper house and secured its passage. In each case the land passed to the association for park purposes, and both patents were issued on the 11th day of September, 1905. The one from the general government was filed by the recorder of Yuma county, Colorado, for record on the 2nd day of October following its issue, and is recorded in book 36, page 9. The one from the state of Colorado was filed on the same date as the other and is recorded in book 32, page 516.

Mr. Robert Lynam of Wray, Colorado, and J. J. Peate of Beverly, Kansas, petitioned their respective legislatures for an appropriation of $5,000 by each, to be expended for the erection of a monument upon the island. These states passed acts appropriating $2,500 each, and the total amount of $5,000 was spent upon this notable and highly honorable undertaking. The following description of the monument, written by Eli Schaaf, is taken from the annual for 1906: "On April 15th, 1905, a committee was appointed to get designs and bids for the work, and on May 15th the contract was let to the Denver Marble and Granite Co. The monument is set on a foundation sunk in the ground, being 12 x 12 feet by 6 feet deep. Forty-nine piling, 8 feet long, were put in the bottom of the excavation, reaching to bedrock, and the hole is filled with broken stone, sand, and cement to the top of the ground. The base is of Silver Plume (Colorado) granite, made in three sections, the first being 11 x 11 feet, 10 inches thick; second, 9 x 9 feet, 12 inches thick; third, 6 x 6 feet, 12 inches thick. The monument is made of light Barre (Vermont) granite. The die is 5 x 5 feet at the bottom; top of monument 2 feet 11 inches square, and total height is 18 feet and 1 inch. There are 1,500 letters on the monument, put on in the following order: On the west side, the names of the killed, wounded, and those who were not hurt, making a total of fifty-two names; on the north side, a short history of the battle; on the east side, stating that the states of Kansas and Colorado appropriated the funds; and on the south, a short account of the four scouts going after relief."

Four tablets mark the spots where the dead were buried, as nearly as these could be located by the scouts themselves, and are as follows: Lieut. Fred H. Beecher, U.S.A.; J. H. Mooers, U.S.A.; Lewis Farley, Geo. W. Culver, and William Wilson. Happily the monument was placed so that these stones surround it. Fred H. Beecher's is west of the Monument; Louis Farley's northwest; Dr. Mooers' northeast; Culver's and Wilson's southeast.

The holding of reunions at Beecher Island in the early days was not always as pleasant as it might have been, no buildings for protection from wind, rain or sunshine. The committee shifted around and did the best they could to make it pleasant for those that attended the reunions. The association bought a tent to hold the reunions in, 35 x 70 feet, which was found to be entirely too small to accommodate the people that attended the annual reunion. Temporary buildings were erected, to the amount of about ten or twelve hundred dollars, with which the association managed to get along for a number of years. Finally in the year 1925, through the untiring efforts of Representative Ed M. Ellis of Wray, Colorado, and Senator John King of Sterling, Colorado, a bill was passed by the general assembly of the state of Colorado appropriating the sum of fifteen thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting an auditorium on Beecher Park, Yuma county, Colorado. This money was not available until in 1927, when the committee designated, namely the state engineer, Yuma county surveyor, and the Beecher Island Memorial Association, advertised for bids and let the contract. Every detail was carried out according to the provisions made in the bill as it was passed. It was found to be impossible to build a building anywhere near the size that was needed at the island. Those in charge decided to make provisions for a heating plant, light plant, and a good stage, then enclose all they could in the rough, leaving one end open, boarded up for protection until they could raise the money to add on 32 feet more and finish it all, then Beecher Island will be on the map forever and the people of the surrounding country, yes, Colorado and Kansas, will have one of the most beautiful sacred spots in the middle west, made so by some of the best and purest blood that was ever poured on freedom's soil. Five men were killed, seventeen wounded in one day, out of a little band of fifty-two loyal Americans.

If you will read the roster, you will see names of men who may have been born in France, Germany or Ireland, yet they were all Americans. Every man that shows by actions, words and deeds that he is loyal to the American ideals must be recognized as a loyal American. The blood of the killed and wounded have consecrated, hallowed and dedicated Beecher Island for all time to come. All honor to the brave scouts that were more fortunate than their comrades and came out of that fearful struggle without a scratch apparently, yet with sadness in their hearts for their less fortunate comrades. We read in the good book that greater love hath no man than he that layeth down his life for another. Each one of those men, when they joined the Forsyth Scouts, laid his life upon the altar of his country. Too much honor cannot be given them and now since they have all passed on to that great beyond, too much cannot be said, too much cannot be done to improve and beautify the spot of hallowed ground, known as Beecher Island, 17 miles south of Wray, Colorado, on the Arickaree river.

We are sure glad that on our journey through life we passed this way and have had the good fortune to meet and become acquainted with a few of those men who served, not for selfish booty, but real men courageous, who did not flinch at duty. Our meetings with them have always been pleasant; each meeting proved better than the first. We know that we are better merely by knowing these grand old scouts. They have all gone to reward except James J. Peate. The good Lord must have spared poor Jack for some purpose, no doubt a few more kind acts. If Jack finds out what they are he will take care of them. Jack has worked long and hard for Beecher Island. He brought it to life in 1898 and has stayed right by it and has done more than his part in making it what it is today. We want to thank every man, woman and child that has loaned us a helping hand in any way, if it is their presence or a pleasant smile, we thank you just the same. To those that have done nothing but find fault, if there are any, we leave them with the good Lord and ask Him to open their eyes, give them light and let them see themselves as they are seen by others. By Robert Lynam.

In Regard to the Names of the Scouts.

George A. Forsyth, twenty-five years after the fight, wrote a history as well as he could remember it, but in the year of 1905 he and his good wife came to the unveiling of the monument and to view the old battle ground once more. After he looked over the field for a while he remarked that he wished he had come and looked the ground over before he wrote his book. He saw he had been turned around. Why think strange of that? Remember, he was wounded three times early in the fight and laid in a hole in the sand until the ninth day when relief came. He suffered untold agony. He never flinched. He was a brave old patriot, loved by all who knew him.

We have three lists of names of the Forsyth scouts. They vary a little, but we believe we understand how that came about. The committee that was appointed to look up the names of the Forsyth scouts produced this list of names and they were approved by Colonel Forsyth, and placed on the monument.

The Names that Appear on the Monument

General Geo. A. Forsyth
Thomas Alderdice
Hudson Farley
George Green
Joseph Lane
George Oaks
Thomas Murphy
Howard Morton
A. J. Pliley
Chalmers Smith
S. Schlesinger
W. Stewart
Fletcher Violett
Thomas Ranahan
Eli Ziegler
A. J. Entler
John Haley
Thomas O'Donnell
H. H. Tucker
John Lyden
J. S. Stillwell
Pierre Trudeau
C. B. Whitney
Abner T. Groves
Martin Burke
Harry Davenport
Isaac Thayer
Frank Harrington
Wm. H. H. McCall
William Reilly

Louis A. McLoughlin
T. K. Davis
Fred H. Beecher
J. H. Mooers
Louis Farley
G. W. Culver
William Wilson
W. Armstrong
G. B. Clark
John Donovan
Barney Day
C. C. Piatt
H. T. McGrath
Edward Simpson
M. R. Lane
Richard Gantt
John Hurst
J. H. Ketterer
Alfred Dupont
Wallace Bennett
C. B. Nichols
M. R. Mapes

Chapter V

Address of Dr. C. A. Brooks, September, 1905

THROUGHOUT this production there appeared contributions from those who were eye-witnesses, or investigators, or students, or agents. In chapter five there is added the speech of Dr. C. A. Brooks, whose eloquent and patriotic address was delivered at Beecher Island in September 1905. That will take older readers back for a half a century when the members of the Grand Army of the Republic the preservation of our Union, back in private life gave utterance to the finest examples of sincere patriotic expressions on stated occasions, facing audiences who were familiar with the struggles at home and in the battle field, in the up-holding the unity and integrity of this preserved Republic.

The occasions of this speech, the man who delivered it, and the circumstances under which he spoke, gave what Daniel Webster had well said; "A good speech rests in the man, in the place and in the theme." The Doctor well sustains a reputation and has left a speech well worthy, not only of the readers of this book, but those who never saw or knew the orator of the day. Our author does well in giving place in his book for that notable utterance.

Address of Dr. C. A. Brooks, at Beecher Island Reunion, September, 1905.

From time immemorial it has been customary, among all people, to celebrate the occurrence of great events and of brave deeds, by monuments or by solemn memorial days, thus teaching succeeding generations the story of their nation's life, and keeping alive the memory of its heroes. This is well, and it is especially fitting that in the United States these memorial days be ever observed, that our girls and boys growing up by our side, and the great army of foreigners coming to share the blessings of a land of liberty and equal rights, may learn the value of our institutions, by learning the fearful cost at which they were purchased by our nation.

A few days ago the City of Denver was the meeting place of thousands of the veterans of the Civil War, and to the many thousands who witnessed our parade, the dear old flag became more sacred and more full of meaning than ever before, and renewed vows of loyalty filled many a heart, as they joined in the ovation tendered us. These men were representatives of a vast army, who over forty years ago vowed to the whole world, that "Under the Constitution the Union one and indivisible must and shall be supreme," and a new message was given to our flag, that it might declare in every land, that here the rights of man, and freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom in the highest sense is guaranteed to all, by an invincible nation.

A few years ago, an English fellow traveler, pointed out to me what he considered one great defect in American social life: "You have no aristocracy, you know." I assured him that he was misinformed, that we do have an aristocracy, that the old soldiers are "it," and that this star is its emblem; we having received the knightly accolade, not from the hands of a king, but from the hearts of a nation of kings. How proudly – my comrades – do we declare that if "U.S." did not spell us, it could not stand for United States, and that the glorious fabric our fathers reared would now be a shapeless mass of ruins.

Today, have we come to commemorate the gallant deeds of a little band of men, equally worthy of honor, who thirty-seven years ago, against fearful odds and at great cost in life, and in physical suffering, wrote another chapter in the already great history of the valor and manhood of the American soldier. To myself this day is the anniversary of another great battle, five years before, when North and South met in deadly struggle upon the field of Antietam. Brave men in gray (mistaken, as we believe), were fighting in defense of what they believed to be the right. But our foemen were men of tender, noble hearts and high principles of honor. To them a wounded foe was a sacred charge, and tenderly would they care for him, These men at Beecher Island were surrounded by a vastly outnumbering force, not of humane men, but of cruel savages, who knew no mercy, and fairly revelled in rapine and butchery. Both battles were necessary and far-reaching for good in their results but I feel that of the two, this was the greater. The Civil War had ended, our flag floated over an undivided union, the foul curse of human slavery was forever blotted out, and to all the world went out the glad tidings, that here was truly the home of the free. But the westward march was hampered by the savages, who barred the door to progress, who would not themselves advance, nor, if in their power to prevent, would allow this great domain to be converted into homes. The battle of Beecher Island swept away this hindrance, and ever since then the doors of this western land have stood opened wide to men.

Many centuries ago, a Roman soldier, proud of his citizenship, declared, "with a great price purchased I this freedom." Today, as we consider our great nation, its place at the forefront of the nations of the world, and remember that its influence upon the world's life in all departments is ever uplifting, that our unsullied flag is more than a mere collection of colors but is the symbol of all that is highest and best in national life, our hearts swell with laudible pride, and we declare as our highest boast, "I am an American."

But with a great price has our nation purchased its place. These men were American soldiers — not hirelings, ready for pay to serve any master, not creatures of the slums, but men — men of high ideals of manhood; those who survived being honored by the communities in which they lived. Not long since I read two statements, equally erroneous: That Christianity is dying out; and that Patriotism is rapidly losing its meaning. It seems to me that the great up-outrising of American boys in response to President McKinley's call for volunteers for the Spanish-American war is a sufficient refutation to this assertion. The heroism of these men at their lonely post on the plains was not lost, but is a constant inspiration to the highest patriotism. I honor Forsyth and bow in reverence at the memory of Beecher, but I also accord equal honor to the brave men of the rank and file, who so nobly played their part. The poet has made "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" immortal; but no poet's imagination can adequately conceive the bravery of Jack Stillwell and Pierce Trudeau, of Jack Donovan and Pliley as they went in the darkness upon their journey to Fort Wallace in search of relief for their comrades. Their danger, their suffering, their fortitude, are beyond our imagination. All honor to these men, every one of them. But how shall we fittingly honor them? Monuments of granite will crumble and be forgotten; words of praise are soon unremembered in this busy, rushing, whirling age of ours. How can we sufficiently honor them, and all others, for the sacrifices they made in the cause of humanity and civilization? I answer:

By pure and upright living on our part. These men gave their lives for the larger life of a people. Their hands opened wide the door to the on-march of our civilization, but many of them entered not in themselves. They died for us. The strength and power of a nation is not to be found in its armaments and preparedness for war, but in the high character of its people.

Babylon of olden times was noted for its architecture and the magnificence of its city, Egypt led in science, the Armies of Rome dominated the world, Greece was the mistress of art, the mother of literature and philosophy, but the masses of Greece, of Rome, of Egypt, of Babylon, were ignorant and besotted, and these nations fell and vanished from among men. Not railroads nor electricity, nor any or all of these things which mark our material and intellectual advancement constitute civilization, though they spring from it. The homes, the schools, the churches, the higher and broader ideals which mark the life of the people, these declare real civilization. The nation where the life is broad and unselfish, where ideals and determination are high, is a strong nation and invincible. Until the coming of Jesus Christ, to give us truer views of the purpose and possibilities of our race, the world had no true ideal of civilization. I have not — I cannot have any degree of sympathy with that maudlin sentimentality which possesses some, and which prates, as of an evil, of the passing of the Indian and the buffalo. God's law of progress is upon our race, and His inflexible law dooms the people who will not advance. He never intended that this vast country, with all its unsurpassed possibilities, should remain a mere roaming place for the buffalo, or the hunting ground for a few savages.

Our beautiful towns and cities, the fertile farms, our schools of which we are so justly proud, the thousands of our people who have made this desert blossom as the rose, declare to some extent the Divine purpose. The men of Beecher Island made today and tomorrow possible. We honor them by entering into their labors, and carrying to its completion the mission of the pioneer, By holding before the young the highest standard of moral and intellectual life: By exalting manhood immeasurably above money, and recognizing the possibility of noble manhood in everyone.

A millionare may and often is a mere pauper, a true man rich in character never can be poor, even though he be clothed in cheap garments and toils for his daily bread and in him is that power which declares safety and perpetutity to the nation. Whatever it may be that lowers the moral standard, to that extent degrades and weakens humanity, and is treason to our state, to our people, to God.

We honor these men by maintaining at any cost to ourselves American principles and institutions. Our flag declares to all the world that manhood and not the accidents of birth or wealth, is the measure of a man. The equal rights are for all, that every avenue of advancement is open to everyone, and that we have heard the command to advance and are obedient thereto. In the monarchies of the ancient world the people belonged to the monarch and the lords of the soil. In Greece and Rome the populace belonged to the state; in America the state exists for the people and for the advancement of all humanity. The principles given by Jesus Christ, declaring the high value of manhood, form the very heart and soul of our Republic. Our institutions are the natural outgrowth of this ideal. We are a nation of homes, a nation of schools and popular education, a nation upholding law and demanding respect for every true American. No slave can be a full man. A slave to ignorance, to superstition, to passion, to evil habits is incomplete and weak. We honor our dead as we become free ourselves and labor for the enfranchisement of our race.

America has become a mighty force in the determination of the world's destiny. Into every land have we gone with our commerce, our manufactures, our social ideals, our political, economic, educational and religious views, and through these are we influencing for good all peoples. From being simply an experiment, looked upon as doomed to certain failure, or at the best doubtful in its results, we now stand in the very van of the nations of the world, and in the great war between Russia and Japan, between the Slav and the Anglo-Saxon civilization, between the fourteenth century and the twentieth, the only ruler in all the world who could be dared to openly intervene for the ending of the fearful struggle was our own American President, Theodore Roosevelt, and he was heard and obeyed.

But great as we have become, we are yet threatened by perils, not from without. I truly believe we are impregnable to any foreign foe. An English writer recently demonstrated to his own satisfaction, how easily a hostile fleet could take possession of New York, and her forces march across the continent. In my very callow boyhood I once wanted some honey in a hive, but the bees seriously objected, and I felt them their possessions. Our foes – our perils – are from within, not from without. The great masses of low and vicious foreigners which throng our great cities; men and women from the lowest strata of European social life, crowd to our shores, many of them crazed by their Godless anarchistic ideas, and bent on the utter extirpation of social order, of property, of law, of God. In the days of the French Revolution the assembly, by a solemn vote, declared God abolished. But in a few weeks one of the leading papers declared, "We must restore religion, God is as essential to the French people as liberty, and there can be no liberty without God."

We are called upon to face the liquor traffic, which is utterly unAmerican in that it is destructive of home and true manhood; that it annually is the direct cause of ninety per cent of the crimes of the land; that according to best medical testimony it causes a large proportion of malformed and imbecile births, and of the cases of insanity annually occurring; and in that it avowedly sets itself in antagonism to law. Vast sums are contributed for the purchase of voters, for the buying of legislatures, judges, jurors and officers of the law. That which everywhere and at all times by its results declares itself a curse cannot but be a menace to our nation.

Revelations of political corruption cause a shuddering of heart as we look upon them. Men, whose coward hearts refused to allow them to meet our brave foe-men of '61-'65, but led them to seek shelter in Canada, now demand that we crouch before them like whipped dogs and uncomplainingly obey their behests. Let us honor our dead by demanding honor and purity in public affairs and refusing to elect to any office any man on whom a stain may rest. Let us not cease until every office from the lowest to the presidential chair shall be filled by men who glorify the office, not receive a false glamour therefrom.

One of the essential cornerstones of our American Republic is our public school system. Tyrants, whether political or ecclesiastical, find its policy to keep the masses in ignorance. When men begin to think and to question why, tyranny trembles. No nation upon the earth has a public school system comparable to ours. The land is dotted with school houses, whose doors are opened wide equally to the child of the poor man and the child of the millionaire. In these are raised up the thinkers and the doers of the nation. The boys and girls are taught to love and to reverence their country and to honor its flag. Were I to stop and sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," some of you older people perhaps might not know the words, but every boy and girl in this assembly would brighten up and heartily and loyally join in the nation's hymn. It would be indeed a sad day to the United States when the scope and power of the public schools were lessened, and it seems incredible that there should be found any in the land who would do it hurt. Yet bitter and determined attacks are being made upon our public schools in the name of religion. I thank God for the absolute separation of church and state, and though I am intensely loyal to my church, yet because of that loyalty I am ready to battle in any way against any attempt at political dominance.

There is no tyranny more cruel and debasing and unrelenting than ecclesiastical despotism, and a death blow will be dealt to our Republic if the education of our children were taken from the state and placed in the power of any denomination.

In the roster of the Beecher Island scouts I read the names of men of different nationalities — American, Irish, German, French — but all were Americans. Every man who is loyal to the American ideas, it matters not where was the land of his birth, is an

American; and in that sense I say, "Let none but Americans be on guard."

You, my friends, who have entered upon the heritage bequeathed you by these men, have bravely and well continued the battle they began. Yours is a record of difficulties, of toil, of discouragement, of success. Your honest, upright lives form the most glorious monument to those whom today we honor. True bravery is the steadfast adherence to duty in spite of every obstacle. May God fill your souls with that true spirit of American manhood which will prompt to sacrifice for the general good and constant standing for righteousness and for right things.

Children, young people, to you is committed a solemn charge. Because men dared the danger and privations of savage warfare, and rendered up their lives at the call of duty, you are surrounded with blessings and enjoy such privileges as are given the children of no other land. The soldiers who fought and died upon this heroic spot, the brave fathers and mothers in your homes, who have shown a heroism no less, but in many cases far more glorious than that called out upon the field of battle, have well and nobly done their part. But soon we who have fought the battles of life will be laid to rest. During the past year more than forty thousand who wore the star of the Grand Army of the Republic have answered to the final roll call. Soon no survivor of that terrible day of thirty-seven years ago will be among the living upon earth. Soon upon you, to the full extent of your powers, both actual, and potential, will rest the destinies of this nation. We have striven to the best of our ability to its upbuilding, and we will leave to you an unbroken, a glorious union. What shall be the record you will write? You may never be called to the terrible sights and sounds of battle, but remember, every life has its duties, and he alone is brave who is faithful.

By all the memories of the past, I charge you to be loyal to God, yourselves and your fellow men. Remember that loyalty to God is essential to the highest and most perfect loyalty to the state. So live that this Union will be more glorious and more stable when you give it into the hands of your children, than it is today; and that because of this, the whole world shall have come into a broader, purer, more Christ-like life. My comrades, there are but few of us in this assembly who wear this talismanic star, and our numbers are rapidly decreasing. Soon for you and for me will come the orders for our final muster out. Until then be true. Stand firmly at your post until the relief shall come. But then – what shall be the character of our discharge? Shall we, because of unclean, unfaithful, selfish lives, be dishonorably discharged to shame and everlasting contempt? Or shall we, as we come into the presence of the Supreme Commander, hear the welcome plaudit: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

My comrades, wear these stars over hearts so loyal, so patriotic, so vigilant, so brave, that they shall ever be to others incentives to the most unselfish loyalty, and to yourselves guards against everything which can disgrace the past which you have made honorable, and our dead have made sacred; or which can bring shame upon the Grand Army of the Republic.

Let us ever bear in mind that by true and noble living, by constant aspiration after the highest ideals, by unselfish devotion to the welfare of our fellowmen, and by an unswerving loyalty to God, and by this alone, can we pay the highest tribute of honor to the brave men in memory of whose heroism we have today assembled."

Sequel to Beecher Island.

I have quoted at some length from the Beecher Island Annual of 1930 as compiled by Robert Lynam of Wray, Colorado, that you may fully understand what they did there and its results in preparation for settlement, with at least some security from the Indians, in northwest Kansas, southwest Nebraska, and eastern Colorado.

The Island became sacred as a Shrine of their sufferings and sacrifices, and as stated a monument was erected near the graves on which was inscribed the names of General Forsyth, Lieutenant Beecher, Dr. Mooers and the scouts composing the little band. The graves of those buried there were also marked with their names inscribed on appropriate markers, or head stones, and one could not help but feel when standing near them that he was on sacred and hallowed ground.

The location being on the Arickaree, a fork of the Republican, 17 miles south of Wray, Colorado, naturally was fostered in its improvement by the citizens of that city, and particularly by Robert Lynam, the Editor and publisher of the weekly newspaper, the *Wray Rattler*.

The condition of Beecher Island was greatly changed by the devastating flood of 1935 which caused the loss of so many lives and destruction of property on the Arickaree and Republican valleys. The Island was entirely covered by the raging torrent, and the water rushing against the monument erected with so much reverence and care, undermined it, washing over and destroying the graves of those buried there. The Arickaree formed a new channel, running through what was the center of the island where the graves were and the monument stood.

Desiring to know the real condition at this time, 1940, I wrote the Editor of the *Wray Rattler* and the following is a copy of his reply.

Wray, Colorado, 7/15 1940

Mr. F. G. Stilgebouer,
Benkelman, Nebraska.

Dear Sir:—

"In reply to your inquiry about the condition of the Beecher Island since the flood of 1935, may I say that I have talked with Arch Miller, one of the Trustees, and he gave me the following information. The Island was badly damaged by the flood. The grave locations on the Island are no longer known. Five sections of the base of the monument and one section of the shaft have been dug out and have been put on a foundation that is located near the Auditorium on higher ground. Three sections of the main shaft of the monument have never been found since the flood. If I can give you any additional information at a later date, I will be glad to do so."

Respectfully,
Frank E. Lashelle.

Thus the monument as it was erected is destroyed, the location of the graves of those who died there in the defense of humanity are no longer known, but what these brave men did there will forever live in the hearts of their countrymen wherever known.

On the Anniversary each year, in September, the Association meets in the Auditorium in memory of their great achievement and sacrifice, and thus it is that "To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die." May we, who come after them, ever honor and revere their memories, their heroic deeds and their supreme sacrifices that civilization might progress, and the West provide homes for its people.

Chapter VI

Massacre of Nelson Buck Surveying Party, 1869

CHAPTER six is entitled "Massacre of Nelson Buck." Well might it be termed my mysterious massacre of Nelson Buck, because the detail and facts of this tragedy, of the place, as had for many years been unascertained, and I note that although places are marked and some names given, yet the argument on some essentials still proceeds. A noted cynical writer said "Histories are but agreed to." That was harsh and yet histories are made by men, concerning the actions of men and nations, and the imperfections of time and the fading memories that must be depended upon will leave unsolved many of the important historical facts upon which the community or state may never fully agree. But, be that as it may, the murder of the Buck party is one of the miner, but most significant examples among the tragedies of the plains.

Massacre of Nelson Buck and Party by the Indians.

Nelson Buck was employed to do some government surveying in 1869 and soon after our arrival on the Beaver, it was currently reported that they were massacred by Indians and this report was further verified by the finding of portions of a wagon and wheel in the creek on the S.E.¼ of section 31 township one, range 28. Also some parts of surveyor instrument and chain. Thomas Plum, a lad of about 13 who came with his parents to Nebraska in 1873, discovered them when fishing along the creek. A suitable marker has been erected on the highway about 2 miles west of Marion, Nebr. on which is inscribed the names of Nelson Buck and seven of his helpers. This marker, I judge, is erected directly north of where the material was found, and no doubt they were camped near the creek. For many years there were two corners on the half section line, one about 200 yards south of the other, each recognized as government corners by adjoining landowners and so considered, which made a jog in the road. The early settlers supposed the Buck party were killed while checking this work as the material in the creek was found a little east of south of these corners. The mystery of the disappearance of the Buck party and the manner of their annihilation was unsolved to us on the Beaver until recent years. An interesting account of the loss of the Buck party was written by Senator Cordeal, in which he described a running fight down the Beaver a good many miles. He no doubt had source material as he was a very careful student of history. But we on the Beaver always believed the massacre took place on the Beaver on land above described in Red Willow County. To my mind this is now verified by the confession of "Pawnee Killer." The massacre and no doubt the facts being described by Captain D. C. Poole, the then Indian agent at Whetstone, in his book, "Sioux of Dakota."

Pawnee Killer stated in substance that while they were hunting they saw some surveyors near their camp. A man evidently was left to guard the camp of the surveyors and do the cooking, none of the rest of the men were in sight. Some of Pawnee Killer's young men approached the camp intending to ask for food. When nearing the camp, they were fired upon by others in ambush and one Indian was wounded. This commenced the fight and the Indians killed eight men, destroyed their camp, surveying instruments and wagon. Pawnee Killer says the rest no doubt were killed by other Indians. There were four more men in the party and perhaps it was these four men who staged the running fight down the Beaver, as stated in the record made by Senator Cordeal of McCook. Pawnee Killer justified the acts of his young men by the fact that they were fired on first, which is important if true.

Some years ago, one ownership covered both sides of the road, the south corner was taken to be the corner, the jog taken out, a good state highway built and, as stated, a suitable marker erected on the south side of the road to commemorate this historic spot.

Chapter VII

The Battle of Massacre Canyon Between Sioux and Pawnees. Dedication of the Monument.

CHAPTER seven is a thrilling chapter of bloodshed and cruelty, depicting the final battle between Sioux and Pawnee, whose enmity ultimately played into the hand and purpose of their natural foe, the white man, whose excuse is "The best interests of our civilization." It is a fact we regret, but who among us will condemn it, especially not those who adopt the great Frenchman's philosophy saying, "Civilization is made of enlightened selfishness."

The chapter is full of thrilling incidents and moves from beginning to the end with dramatic effect. When the Cinema Screen-making shall be moved from both Atlantic and Pacific coasts some ambitious producer will turn his talent to chapter seven of this interesting book of historic fact.

THE BATTLE OF MASSACRE CANYON

August 5, 1873

The Unfortunate Ending of the Last Buffalo Hunt of the Pawnees

PRINCIPAL CHIEFS

Pawnee: Sky Chief, Sun Chief, Fighting Bear
Sioux: Spotted Tail, Little Wound, Two Strikes

An account of the last Battle of Indians

By J. W. Williamson, Trail Agent

"A score or more of times I have been requested to write my personal recollections and experiences with the Pawnees on their last buffalo hunt, which ended in a battle with their old enemy, the Sioux.

So many stories have been written, all claiming to be authentic, that I have hesitated to pen for publication a true account of

Massacre Canyon Monument erected by an appropriation of the Congress, to commemorate the last fight between the Plains Sioux Indians, and the reservation Pawness.

the battle which ended so disastrously for the Pawnees, knowing that it will differ, in many respects, from accounts which have been published heretofore.

In the spring of 1873, the Pawnees at the Genoa agency numbered 2,460. Of this number 600 were fighting men, or warriors. I had come to the agency three years previous and was working for the government at the time the Pawnees left on their last buffalo hunt. At this time buffaloes were feeding in the valleys of the Platte, Loup, Niobrara, and Republican rivers and their tributaries. The nearest buffaloes to Genoa were as far west as Plum Creek Station (now Lexington), and a place consisting of a few houses where Arapahoe now stands.

It was the custom of the Pawness to hunt buffaloes twice a year. The summer hunt was for meat, tent material and moccasin leather, and the winter hunt was for meat and robes. The government, in order to avoid clashes between the Pawnees and the Sioux, had divided the hunting grounds. The Sioux were confined to that part of the country north of the Niobrara river, and the Pawnees to the country south of the Niobrara to the Kansas line.

Names Trail Agents.

To keep the Indians confined to the territory assigned them and to prevent them from molesting the homesteaders who were pouring into the state and filing on land, trail agents were appointed to accompany the Indians.

In May, 1873, the Pawnees held a council meeting and decided to leave the agency on the summer hunt in July. Major Burgess, a Quaker, was agent at Genoa, and thru him the Indians made their request for permission to hunt, and also for the appointment of a trail agent to accompany them. Texas Jack (John Omahander) had acted as trail agent the previous year and made application for reappointment. George Clothier of Columbus, also applied for the position. I did not apply for the place and was surprised when one of the chiefs came to me and informed me that they had decided to request the government to appoint me to accompany them.

The Pawnees were made up of four different bands: The Skeedes, the Kitkahas, the Chowees and the Petahowerats. Each band had its head and sub-chiefs, but Petah La Shauro was the supreme head of the Pawnee nation, and, if I am not mistaken, was the last chief to have that distinction, the position ending with the death of this noted Indian, who had always been friendly with white people. It was the custom to allow each band to send an equal number on the buffalo hunt.

A few days before starting a young man by the name of Platt, who was visiting his uncle, an Indian trader near Genoa, came to me and asked to go along and of course I had no objection as he would be company for me. He was about my age and a fine fellow although not accustomed to western life and rather what we called a tenderfoot.

Start of the Hunt.

On the second day of July, 1873, the Pawnees, to the number of 700 left Genoa for the hunting grounds. Of this number 350 were men, the balance women and children. Most of the men were armed with bows and arrows, old fashioned muzzle loading rifles; a few had seven shot Spencer carbines, and some carried Colt's powder and ball revolvers. All were mounted, and in addition took with them 800 extra ponies to pack home the meats and hides.

Two hours before we started for the hunting grounds, Chief Petah La Shauro sent for me. As I entered the council hall the old man extended his hand and addressed me in his language, which was interpreted for me, altho I understood Pawnee to some extent and later could speak the language, fluently. In substance the chief said: 'You are a young man. You have never hunted buffaloes. I have instructed my people to take good care of you, and to obey you. I want you to feel at home on this trip. You will be the guest of my son, "Sun Chief."'

A Splendid Specimen.

The chief was about 60 years old at the time, a magnificent specimen of physical manhood for his years. I consider him, intellectually, the greatest Indian I ever met. Had he been an educated white man he would have taken his place as a leader in state and national affairs. He was kind, considerate, sympathetic, but firm in his position as head of the tribe.

Their way of traveling was on horseback, with extra horses to pack what they needed while on the hunt and to carry back the meat and hides to the reservation. An average of 10 to 15 miles a day was all they could cover. They would get up at break of day and be on their way to the next camping place by the time it was daylight without taking time to get anything to eat.

When a good camping place was located the squaws would do all the work, and the men would hunt and lie around the balance of the time. The men were the first to eat, the squaws and children got whatever was left, and often there would be very little left.

At that time the county of Nance was their reservation and Genoa was the seat of the Pawnee agency.

We started on our journey by crossing the Loup river two and one half miles south of the Agency and camped on Prairie creek about five miles from Silver Creek, went to the Platte river and followed up on the south side to near where Lowell now stands. There we had our first excitement.

I went to the town to get a square meal and some of the Indians went along. At the time a bunch of cowboys were in town for what they called a good time, drinking and shooting. I was standing in front of the hotel watching the excitement when I saw a cowboy ride out in the street and grab the rope from an Indian who was leading his pony. I got on my horse and took after him and when I overtook him I rode between him and the pony, cut the rope and took the pony back to the Indian and told him to go down to the camp and tell the chiefs to send some of their men up, for I could see that there was going to be a rough time as the cowboys were riding up and down the street and raising Ned in general. I remember of them scaring a four-horse immigrant team so that they got into such a mix-up that the wagon was upset and the women and children were spilled out. It was not long before about 150 of the Pawnee warriors came riding into town and the handful of cowboys must have seen them for in a short time there was not a cowboy to be seen anywhere.

There might be someone yet living there who remembers how the cowboys used to shoot up and down the streets and raise cain in general.

The next day we moved on up the Platte to Plum Creek station, now Lexington, and from there we crossed to the Republican river.

The first buffalo that we saw and got was about 50 miles from Plum Creek station. It was on a Sunday afternoon and the scouts located a lone buffalo that had evidently been driven out of a herd by younger bulls. He was in a small canyon and the Indians lined up on each side of the canyon and shot their arrows into him until he looked like a porcupine. He was finally put out of his misery and died from loss of blood. After cutting him open the men would take the knives and cut out a piece of liver and sop it in the blood and eat it raw. That was considered to be a brave act. They dared me to do the same. I did not intend to be outdone by them and looked upon as a coward, so I did likewise. They were surely a happy people after having killed a buffalo.

The country was not settled between Plum Creek station and Arapahoe. The only habitation was a sod house on the divide. As soon as the Indians saw it, some of the young men made for it. The first thing I knew the young devils were riding around the sod house as fast as their ponies would carry them. I started for the place, and found a young woman standing in the door almost scared to death. Some of the Indians were grinding their knives on a sandstone and others were riding around the house. I made them stop and they went away. The woman was alone, her husband had gone somewhere. She told me they came and begged for something to eat, and on being refused grew angry and began to tantalize her in that way. She surely was glad when they went away. I assured her that they would not bother her any more. I often have wondered what would have happened had they been without anyone to keep them from molesting anyone.

We then went on to the Republican and crossed the same at a place called Burton's Bend and headed for Beaver creek.

Before we reached the Beaver, signs indicated that buffaloes had been in that vicinity recently, and scouts were thrown out, a suitable location for a camp selected and preparations made for the anticipated slaughter. No sooner had a halt been made than the scouts came riding in and reported that a herd of three or four hundred buffaloes were feeding on the south slope of the divide between the Beaver and the Prairie Dog creeks.

No Confusion.

Among white men the announcement that buffaloes had been sighted would have created excitement and confusion. If the Pawnees were excited, it was not apparent from any outward signs. There was no confusion, no haste. At the command of the chief presiding that day the hunters formed in the shape of the letter V. At the point rode one of the scouts with a spear decorated with colored feathers. There was no noise, no disorder, as the procession moved over the prairie. The eye of every hunter was on the bunch of feathers on the end of the spear carried by the scout. Suddenly the feathers disappear. It is the signal that the hunt is on. With military precision that V-shaped formation straightens out, and 350 Indians and one white man sweep down the valley into that herd of buffaloes. Each hunter selects a buffalo for his legitimate prey, and cuts it out, and riding up by the side of the fleeing animal shoots it down. Jumping from his pony, the hunter plunges his knife into the heart of the buffalo. In a short time the animal is skinned, the meat cut from around the bones, rolled into strips and bound together with thongs cut from the hide and placed on the pony and brought into camp and turned over to the squaws who cure the meat and tan the hides. For drying the meat the squaws erect willow poles where the meat is placed in strips and in a few days is cured, and when ready for transportation on the backs of ponies, resembles dried lute fish, used by Swedes and Norwegians as a Christmas delicacy.

There must have been some white hunters watching the same herd for we could see three or four covered wagons going for dear life down the valley ahead of the buffaloes. Whoever they were must have been pretty badly frightened when they saw all of a sudden three or four hundred Indian warriors heave in sight. I do not suppose that they thought that there was an Indian anywhere in that section of the country. I can see those fellows yet putting the bud to their horses and making their getaway as fast as their horses could carry them.

In this hunt one of the chiefs took charge of me and showed me how to cut out and kill my first buffalo. So expert were the Pawnees in killing buffaloes, that not one animal escaped death out of several herds attacked.

That night there was a great feast in camp. What Christian people call a prayer meeting was held, and the Great Spirit thanked for his kindness in sending His red children a bountiful supply of meat.

While the feast was going on, a long pole was placed in the center of the camp, and on this was hanging a large piece of cooked meat as a burnt offering to God.

Made a Killing.

After leaving the south slope of the Beaver, we moved up the valley of the Prairie Dog, then down that stream to the Kansas line where another herd of buffaloes was killed and the meat cured. Retracing our steps, we went up the valley of the Prairie Dog for fifty miles, killing several small herds of buffaloes enroute.

While hunting on the divide between the Beaver and Prairie Dog I saw some of the Indian men riding around in a peculiar manner and I rode up to where they were and found that they had a white hunter corralled at the head of a canyon. The poor fellow was almost frightened to death and was standing up in his spring wagon swinging his arms and yelling at the top of his voice. I talked to the Indians and succeeded in getting them to quit. I think that fellow got out of that part of the country as quick as he could. I don't think the Indians would have hurt him as long as he didn't show fight. They might have robbed him and probably would have taken his horses had they not been made to quit.

On the fourth day of August we reached the north bank of the Republican river and went into camp. At 9 o'clock that evening three white men came into camp and reported to me that a large band of Sioux warriors were camped twenty-five miles northwest, waiting for an opportunity to attack the Pawnees for several days, anticipating that we would move up the river where buffaloes were feeding. Previous to this white men visited us and warned us to be on our guard against Sioux attacks, and I was a trifle skeptical as to the truth of the story told by our white visitors. But one of the men, a young fellow about my age at the time, appeared to be so sincere in his efforts to impress upon me that the warning should be heeded, that I took him to Sky Chief who was in command that day, for a conference. Sky Chief said the men were liars; that they wanted to scare the Pawnees away from the hunting grounds so that white men could kill buffaloes for hides. He told me I was a squaw and a coward. I took exception to his remarks, and retorted: "I will go as far as you dare go. Don't forget that."

Now I will refer to the young man, Platt, who accompanied us on this hunt. When it was discovered that the Sioux were going to attack us, he rode up to me and asked me what I was going to do and I told him I was going to stay and see it through. He said that he was going to leave us, which he did, and I did not blame him. I think I would have done the same thing had I been in his place, as he was only going along for the pleasure he could get out of it, but it was different with me, and I could not think of leaving them and be branded as a coward and also be taken to task for shirking my duty, by the Indian office. The man who had charge of the Sioux did not stay with his Indians and was discharged from the service.

Chief Died Fighting.

The following morning, August 5, we broke camp and started north, up the divide between the Republican and the Frenchman rivers. Soon after leaving camp, Sky Chief rode up to me and extending his hand said, "Shake, brother." He recalled our little unpleasantness the night previous and said he did not believe there was cause for alarm, and was so impressed with the belief that he had not taken the precaution to throw out scouts in the direction the Sioux were reported to be. A few minutes later a buffalo scout signalled that buffaloes had been sighted in the distance, and Sky Chief rode off to engage in the hunt. I never saw him again. He had killed a buffalo and was skinning it when the advance guard of the Sioux shot and wounded him. The Chief attempted to reach his horse, but before he was able to mount, several of the enemy surrounded him. He died fighting. A Pawnee, who was skinning a buffalo a short distance away, but managed to escape, told me how Sky Chief died.

A young Indian who was riding near me when buffaloes were reported in sight, borrowed my gun and rode off to engage in the hunt. He, too, was killed and I never saw him or the gun again.

We had not proceeded more than a mile after the departure of Sky Chief, when I noticed a commotion at the head of the procession, which had suddenly stopped. I started to ride up where three of the chiefs were talking, when a boy of sixteen rode up and stopped me. Dismounting, he tied a strip of red flannel on the bridle of my horse, and after remounting, told me that the Sioux were coming. What significance was attached to the red flannel on the bridle I was never able to learn.

Sioux Were Coming.

We were only about a hundred yards from the head of a canyon or draw that extended down to the river when the Sioux were reported coming, and orders were shouted down the line for squaws, children and pack ponies to take refuge in the canyon. The warriors were preparing to ride forth to meet the enemy. Coming to Chief Terra Recekons, who was surrounded by several leading men of the Skeede band, I suggested that we file back down the canyon about two miles where there was a small growth of timber, and make a stand. The chief was in favor of the suggestion, but Fighting Bear, of the Kitahos, rebelled. He had fought the Sioux before and said we could whip them in an open fight, and it was finally decided to adopt his suggestion and make a stand on the ground we were on.

It seemed but a short time after the squaws and pack horses had disappeared over the edge of the canyon, when the first Sioux appeared in the distance. Down the canyon arose a chant. It was the war song of the Pawnee nation, sung by the squaws as they stood side by side and rocked back and forth. Louder and louder grew the song as the enemy approached. I had loaded my revolvers and made up my mind to do my share of the fighting. As the Sioux came over the hill, it became apparent that they outnumbered the fighting men of the Pawness four to one.

I afterwards learned there was between twelve and fifteen hundred in the band under command of Chief Snow Flake, a Brule Sioux, and that most of his warriors belonged to that band. The Sioux were about a mile and a half away when the Pawnees noted they were greatly outnumbered and suggested to me that I go out and parley with them with a view of warding off the threatened attack. I rode out about three hundred yards accompanied by Ralph Weeks, a half breed interpreter, who afterwards studied law and was admitted to the bar in Oklahoma. He died a few years ago. Waving a handkerchief as a token of peace, I attempted to stop the Sioux, but on they came — the whole bunch of them. Suddenly the war whoop of the Sioux sounded, and several puffs of smoke from as many guns, and the whistle of bullets warned me that it was time to beat a retreat. The battle cry of the Sioux was answered with a cry of defiance from the Pawnee warriors, which denoted that a war reception awaited the enemy. All the Indians were mounted, and as I reached the canyon 350 Pawnees hurled themselves at the enemy. At the edge of the canyon my horse, which had been struck by one or more bullets stumbled and fell. It took less than a minute to strip off the saddle and bridle and place them on my buffalo pony, a squaw was holding for me. Mounting my horse, I rode up from the canyon. The Pawnees were putting up a splendid fight, but the odds were against them. I blazed away with my revolvers and fired several shots at the Sioux, when the Pawnee chiefs noticed that the enemy was surrounding the head of the canyon and gave orders to retreat. I did not understand the command, but when I noticed the squaws cutting the thongs that bounds the packs of meat on the ponies and mounting with the children, I concluded it was about time to make a dash myself.

Chiefs in a Duel.

A moment before the retreat commenced, I saw Fighting Bear engaged in a duel with a Sioux chief. I presumed he was a chief from the war bonnet he wore. Both chiefs were fighting with tomahawks. Taking deliberate aim, at close range, I fired at the Sioux. The bullet struck the mark and evidently wounded the chief which gave Fighting Bear an opportunity to finish him. Jumping from his horse, the Pawnee chief scalped his enemy, remounted and grabbing the dead Sioux's horse by the bridle joined in the retreat down the canyon.

One thing, I remember, passed thru my mind as we were fleeing down the canyon. An old lady friend of mind had often asked me why I wore my hair so long, and had told me that it would be a very attractive scalp if I ever got mixed up in an Indian battle. When I saw the Sioux coming I thought of what the old lady had said and I did not lose any time in twisting my hair up and tucking it under my hat so it would not be so noticeable.

I often have thought of a little Indian girl, who evidently had fallen from her mother's back, in our retreat down the canyon. She was sitting on the ground with her little arms raised as if pleading for some one to pick her up. As I passed I tried to pick her up but only succeeded in touching one of her hands. I couldn't return so she was left behind to suffer a horrible death by the bloodthirsty Sioux. Just imagine, dear reader, six or seven hundred Indians; men, women, and children and as many ponies, all huddled together and going for dear life down this canyon, with over a thousand bloodthirsty savages shooting down on them. In some places the canyon was quite narrow, and caused them to almost stop, then was when the most of the lives were lost.

It was in the retreat down the canyon that the greatest loss of life occurred among the squaws and children, the Sioux riding down each side and firing down on them.

As the Pawnees reached the river and crossed to the opposite bank, the Sioux succeeded in cutting off 700 ponies, and had started down the stream to cross at another point to pursue the Pawnees when the sound of a bugle stopped them. Looking across the river, I noticed a company of U. S. cavalry emerge from the timber. When the Sioux saw the soldiers approaching, they beat a hasty retreat. In company with Fighting Bear and two other chiefs I crossed the river and conferred with the officer in command, who suggested that the Pawnees return and gather up the meat left behind and bury the dead. But the Pawnees could not be induced to comply with the suggestion. They were firm in the belief that the meat had already been poisoned and the wounded put to death.

Indians Showed Emotion.

We camped that night on the banks of Red Willow creek. There was nothing to eat. All our supplies had been left behind on the battlefield. I had always understood that an Indian was devoid of emotion, but that night I was convinced that at times an Indian gives vent to his feelings the same as a white man. Seated on the ground rocking back and forth the warriors, who had talked so valiantly a few hours previously, pulled hair from their heads while the tears rolled down their cheeks. While the demonstrations took place, the squaws kept up an incessant wail for the dead.

Now that night after the battle, we camped on Red Willow creek in a demoralized condition. Men, women and children were frantic with grief, moaning and crying for their missing ones so that it was impossible to sleep. I got on my pony and rode for a mile or so from camp in order to get away from the horrible noise. I put in a good night's rest and on waking the next morning, I thought of my eastern friend, Mr. Platt, so I rode down to where the Indians were camped, and inquired of them if they knew anything of him. Some of them told me that the last time they saw him he was riding down the bluffs on the south side of the river in the same direction we were going, so I told them to stay where they were until I came back as I was going to see if I could find him as I did not want to go away without making some effort to find him. I had not ridden more than ten miles before I discovered horse shoe tracks in a buffalo trail leading down a canyon and on looking around, I saw his white horse feeding at the side of the canyon with the bridle and saddle on. I went up to him and taking him by the bridle reins, started down the canyon. I had not gone far before I saw Mr. Platt sitting on the side of a washout with his face buried in his hands. I went up to him and shook him. He looked up in a dazed condition, and in a short time recognized me and exclaimed, "for God's sake, John, is that you? I had given up all hopes of getting out of here alive." I then returned to our camp with him, and got our breakfast at Byfield's store on Red Willow creek. He had not had anything to eat for thirty-six hours. That day we started down the valley for home.

A mile from where we camped lived a man named Frank Byfield. He kept a few groceries, flour, and other supplies for buffalo hunters. He freighted all his goods from Plum Creek station, a distince of seventy or eighty miles. I bought from Byfield thirty sacks of flour and signed a receipt for the same and the government later reimbursed him. Shortly after leaving Red Willow creek we killed a herd of twelve buffaloes and then moved on to Arapahoe which at that time consisted of a few log houses. Here I hired a homesteader for five dollars to haul twelve of the wounded to Plum Creek Station.

At Plum Creek Station a company of soldiers were stationed. Here the wounds of the injured were dressed by an army surgeon.

Barclay White, superintendent of Northwestern Indian Agencies, had his headquarters at Omaha at that time and to him I wired what had occurred, and he made arrangements with the Union Pacific Railroad Company to provide box cars for bringing the Pawnees to Silver Creek. From Silver Creek the Pawnees walked across the country to Genoa, a sorrowful return from the last buffalo hunt in a country that had been their home for so many years.

The loss of the Pawnees in the battle on the Republican was 156, including men, women and children.

Cost Sioux About $10,000.

Several weeks after returning with the Pawnees, I received a letter from Nick Gains, trail agent for the Sioux. He said that the Sioux lost fifty warriors in the battle. Gains was a Frenchman, who married a Sioux squaw and had been adopted into the tribe. He attempted to prevent the Sioux from leaving the Niobrara valley to attack the Pawnees, but they placed a guard over him and rode away on a raiding expedition, which cost the lives of 50 warriors and $10,000 in cash for the government took that amount out of the annuity fund of the Sioux and turned it over to the Pawnees to pay for the meat lost and ponies captured. I had in my pack at the time of the battle a memorandum book containing $7 in money and several letters. Gains sent the book and letters to me by express, but the buck who went thru my pack kept the money.

Sometime during the fall I was sent by the government to the battlefield to bury the dead. At Plum Creek station I hired a livery man named Coles to help me. We drove to Arapahoe, where I hired four more men. I recall the names of only two of them. One was the famous Wild Bill, who was murdered a few years later by Jack McCall at Deadwood. The other was Frank Martin.

We arrived on the battlefield early in the evening, commenced the gruesome work, finishing before dawn and hurrying back to Arapahoe, as the Sioux were reported to be on the war path. At one place on the battlefield were the charred remains of several children, who had evidently escaped injury and been left behind in the retreat only to meet a horrible death by torture at the hands of the Sioux.

During this visit I stopped at Culbertson and the building there, or shelter, as that is what it really was, had been made from buffalo hides taken from the battlefield and stretched over some poles. It made a very warm place in which to live.

I have mentioned before the rules of hunting buffalo and will relate a little incident to explain how strict the Pawnees were in enforcing them and punishing any who disobeyed them.

In giving chase one day to a herd of buffaloes, one young man disobeyed this law and dashed into the herd. That night, while in camp, they brought this young man to me wanting me to punish him. I refused to do so telling them that it wasn't any affair of mine and they would have to punish him as they saw fit. This they did as follows: About forty Indians formed a double row of twenty on a side, each having in their hands an Indian whip or quirt as they called it. This whip was a piece of braided raw hide fitted on a wooden handle and a raw hide loop formed on the handle and put around the wrist to make it convenient for carrying when riding. The culprit was stripped of all his clothes except his breech and was ordered to pass between the lines of Indians. This he did as fast as he could and doubled up in such a manner as to expose as little of his body as possible, as each of the bystanders in the double row gave him a lash with their whips. He made this run in less time than it takes to tell it, but nevertheless his body bore marks of his punishment and blood was running from the cuts given him.

One forenoon while the Indian ponies of about a thousand in number were being herded on the south side of the Republican river on a side hill the ponies stampeded. I had just put a kettle of beans and buffalo meat over the fire to cook and the ponies made a dash over this spoiling all my prospects for dinner. Why I mention this stampede is that the Indians that same night held council as they always believed a stampede of their ponies was an omen of some great disaster. Of course, the massacre followed in a few days and they often alluded to this to me afterwards.

In concluding this little story, I feel that it would not be comlete without saying something about the trip up the Republican Valley in October, 1921, in company with Mr. A. E. Sheldon, secretary of the Nebraska Historical Society, Mr. E. E. Blackman, curator of the Nebraska Historical Society, and Captain Lute North.

I had not been there since the fall of 1873 and instead of seeing buffaloes, deer, antelope and elk, I saw large herds of fine cattle and horses roaming in the pastures and contentment, happiness and prosperity on the hills and in the valleys. Instead of Indian trails and buffalo wallows, I found railroads up the valleys and improved highways to and from the towns and villages. Instead of the Indian tepees and the rough camps of the buffalo hunter, I found beautiful homes, well improved and highly cultivated farms and prosperous villages. Indeed I was very much surprised and pleased to see the new order of things in the once "Wild West" as I had known it. The power and dread of the Indians is no longer felt and feared by the cultured white people. The Pawnees are now but orphans, driven from the land they loved so well to reservations distasteful to their wild and free nature."

The story of the Organization of the Massacre Canyon Memorial Association, for the primary purpose of erecting a Monument to commemorate the Last Battle fought between the Pawnee and Sioux Nations, and its successful conclusion, and dedication as told by A. L. Taylor.

"The foregoing story was related by Mr. Williamson before the Trenton Commercial Club and all present became very much interested. Before the meeting closed I conceived the idea of having a suitable marker placed in memory of this historical event of frontier days.

Soon after with the assistance and encouragement of interested persons in Trenton and surrounding towns, the Massacre Canyon Memorial Association was formed and incorporated.

With the next anniversary of the battle, August 5th, 1923, the first Massacre Canyon Pow Wow was held in Trenton with a band of Sioux Indians present. Since that year the Pow Wow has been an annual event in Trenton, and has grown to be the most popular attraction of its kind in the state. At the Pow Wow in 1924, chiefs from both the Pawnee and Sioux tribes of Indians were present and smoked the pipe of peace, this being the first time peace had really been made between these two tribes, in their history. Through the annual Pow Wows and the efforts of the Massacre Canyon Memorial Association real interest in erecting a memorial increased from year to year. Through the influence of Congressman A. C. Shallenberger a bill was passed by congress appropriating $7,500 for the erection of a suitable memorial for this last battle, and on September 26, 1930, the completed structure was dedicated. In sending his regrets that he could not be present at the dedication ceremonies, Governor Arthur Weaver wrote the following:

"But what availed it to the Sioux to wipe out the Pawnees and appropriate their hunting grounds only to have those same hunting grounds appropriated by a still more powerful force—the all-conquering white man? The battle of Massacre Canyon was not only disastrous to the Pawnees, but also to the Sioux, for the time had come when the plow would replace the rifle and the hunting grounds would be converted into cultivated fields. Nebraska was on the eve of fulfilling its destiny as the home of a civilized people producing food for millions."

"The monument which you are dedicating not only commemorates the last battle of the Pawnees and the Sioux; it also marks a new era when the white man acquired sovereignty and began the building of a new state. May it ever stand as a monument to the sacrifice of the Red Man whose domain the white man has converted into a domicile for millions and a mighty nation of industry and progress."

The monument is located on the top of a hill overlooking the mouth of Massacre canyon, three miles east of Trenton, where it can be plainly seen by travelers on State Highway No. 3 (the Goldenrod) and by passengers on the Burlington railroad.

"The monument, which is built of Minnesota pink granite, stands 35 feet high, and weighs about 91 tons. Near the top of the shaft, and looking westward up the canyon, is a bas-relief of John Grass, noted Sioux chief. A little lower down and looking eastward down the canyon is a bas-relief of Ruling Hisson, a Pawnee warrior who lost his wife and all his children in this battle.

"The ground on which this memorial stands composes three acres. It was purchased by popular subscription and deeded to the state of Nebraska and is now one of Nebraska's state parks."

RECOLLECTIONS OF E. S. HILL

Indianola, Nebraska, 1922

A Sequel to the Story of the Battle of Massacre Canyon in the early days of Southwest Nebraska, as told by J. W. Williamson of Genoa, Nebr.

"Williamson's graphic story of this memorable fight near Trenton, Nebraska, between the Sioux and Pawnees, has created renewed interest in this, the last conflict between these two Indian tribes whose hatred for each other was of long-standing and extreme bitterness.

At the time the events narrated took place, I was one of a handful of the first settlers who had, a short time before, come to the Republican Valley to make our Homesteads. I was living in a small board shack on my homestead near the center of the present city of Indianola in Red Willow County. With me was my family, consisting of my wife and son, a small boy. Another settler, Zeri Sherman, now dead, was also living in a small shack a short distance from my home. A few other early settlers were scattered here and there along the Valley.

Early one morning in August 1873, as I was sitting in the open door of my house, pulling on my boots, a cavalcade of the defeated Pawnees came along the wagon trail from the west, on their way back to their reservation at Genoa, Nebraska. I had heard nothing of the battle, and the first knowledge I had of the presence of Indians, was the sudden appearance of two mounted bucks on ponies, riding at full speed out from the column and coming straight towards my house. In fact, I did not see them until they were close to my door and one buck had ridden so close that his pony's nose was fairly within the door and close to my face. Resenting such familiarity, I, without any thought of possible consequences, caught up my trusty boot-jack and gave the pony a sharp rap on the nose. Having been soundly whipped recently, the Indians were in an ugly mood, and took exceptions to my action by hitting me over the head with their bows. As I remember, their only weapons were bows and arrows. Mr. Sherman, already alluded to, had heard the noise made by the wailing squaws, and had come out to see what was going on. He had a revolver and coming towards my house in anticipation of impending trouble, lined with me in the altercation, making motions with his weapon as though he intended to shoot. I cautioned him not to do this, and fortunately, he did not fire a shot.

As things were getting serious and my wife was becoming badly frightened, a white man suddenly rode out of the column, coming towards us at full speed. He ordered the Indians back into line and seemed to have sufficient authority over the savages to enforce his order. They drew off and rejoined their comrades with some reluctance. This man was J. W. Williams, the author of the battle, and the trail agent sent out by the Government as guide of the Pawnees in their hunting expedition. I probably owe my life and that of my family to the decisive action of this officer.

This Indian fight at Massacre canyon furnished the starting point for the Indianola cemetery, and it came about in this way. The battle was long and bloody — casualties among the Pawnees were very heavy, especially among the squaws and papooses, a large number being killed. Among the number left on the battlefield for dead, was a young squaw whose child had been killed. She herself was wounded mortally but had managed to crawl some distance to the trail followed by hunters who were occasionally passing up and down the Valley. A passing hunter with team and wagon found her and seeing that she was still alive, picked her up and brought her along down the Valley. As the squaw was near death, this man lost no opportunity to leave her with some settler from whom she might receive such care and attention as it was possible to give. The trail leading near to the house occupied by L. B. Korn, living a half mile west of what is now Indianola, the hunter stopped and prevailed on Mr. and Mrs. Korn to take charge of the failing squaw and do what they could for her. Mrs. Korn had formerly lived in the family of the Government Indian Agent of the Pawnee reservation, and knowing something of this tribe, was the more willing to give shelter and care to the unfortunate woman. There had been some missionary effort among these Indians on the reservation, and this squaw could speak and understand a few words of English. Mrs. Korn also had some knowledge of the Pawnee language, so the two women could communicate to some extent.

The squaw was unwilling to be carried into the house, which by the way was built on too small a scale to permit of the convenient entertainment of visitors, and it was arranged to provide shelter under a wagon cover near the house. Here the woman was made as comfortable as the limited facilities would permit, although suffering internally from two bad wounds on the battle field, as well as a long slow ride in a wagon. The few neighbors hearing of the tragic incident and Mrs. Korn's improvised hospital and unusual patient, flocked in to do what they could to assist. Dr. J. S. Shaw, a physician living on a homestead in the vicinity, was summoned and attended the squaw faithfully, treating the wounds and doing everything in his power to relieve her sufferings. From the first, it was seen that the squaw could not recover, and after several days of intense suffering, she passed on to the Indians' Happy Hunting Grounds, having died among strangers, alone and unmourned, with her sad fate probably never known to her people.

No death had occurred among the settlers and this was a new and tragic experience to them. With the feelings of humanity and sympathy so characteristic of pioneers in all new countries, we got together and arranged for a decent burial for this poor woman. A rude coffin was constructed out of some scraps of boards and with as much propriety as our limited means would permit, we laid her away on a high and slightly knoll overlooking the beautiful Republican Valley. The grave was located on land that is now owned by J. P. Reiter of Indianola, and almost within a stone throw of the city limits of Indianola. The grave was well mounded and marked with wooden posts at the head and foot. It remained in that condition for several years, until the tramping of buffaloes and settlers' stock had almost obliterated it.

I have always kept watch of the grave, having a personal interest in it on account of the part I took in the incident. Finally, after the location of the grave was all but lost, some interested persons in Indianola assisted me in erecting a large boulder to mark the spot. This was in time demolished by vandals, and the site of the grave was again about to be lost. A short time ago, after the revival of general interest in this historic battle was aroused by the organization of a memorial association, steps were taken to insure preservation of the grave by patriotic citizens of Indianola. Sufficient money was subscribed to place a large monument of native stone on the grave, and a tablet of concrete, suitably inscribed with a brief history of this Indian woman's tragic death and burial by white men. All was then surrounded with a neat iron fence, thus insuring from desecration and neglect, the last resting place of one of the vanishing tribe of the Pawnees, and marking a memorial for all time of a most interesting event in the annals of the early settlement of the great state of Nebraska.

The citizens of Indianola and many other people who have come here, have visited the spot and taken pictures of the grave. The story of the squaw has been told numberless times with undiminished interest, on the part of the hearers. Of those who had a part in this incident, nearly all, like the squaw, have gone to their last resting places. Only myself and one or two others still remain to tell the story as eye-witnesses of the events narrated above. More than forty-nine years have elapsed since this last fight between the Sioux and the Pawnees, and next summer, the 50th anniversary (1923) of the battle will be celebrated on the spot where so many brave native Americans died."

Chapter VIII

History of the First Settlement; Organization of Red Willow County in 1873

THE author with that charming versatility applied to the profusion of facts and wealth of experience having penned galore stories of Indian warfare may quote:

> *"Stays not to recount the tale*
> *'Twas bloody, but 'tis past,*
> *The firmest cheek might well grow pale*
> *To hear it to the last."*

He deftly turns to all white man facts to tell in piquant phrase about the organization of Red Willow County, and a healthy hint of its later development, notwithstanding the many faux pas, numerous bad breaks of record which nearly all came out all right in the Republican River wash. Finishing the chapter I came to the conclusion that the author more nearly approached the role of a humorist than his boy friend, of Cleveland, did to being a ranking poet.

The McCook Tri-Weekly Tribune, McCook, Nebraska, Friday, March 4, 1927.

The Tribune passes on to its readers today, the full text of the historical paper read before Kiwanis club yesterday at their noon luncheon by Geo. C. Hill. It is historically worthy and accurate and will be of general interest, to old settlers and to the more recent citizens of our city and county as well. There is a touch inescapable to the old settlers of pathos and almost tragedy, mixed with the peans of victory, in visioning the beginning and progress and present of Red Willow county, during its first half century of existence. The almost unimaginable leanness and bareness of those early days contrasted with the hardly appreciated fullness and luxury of our present day life may be quite difficult for the present generation to grasp, but it must in some measure appeal to their sense of appreciation and gratitude. But the picture is correct. It is a long cry, but in the light of today, a satisfying emotion. The story is worth your time and attention — read it yourself and be thankful.

Historical Sketch of Red Willow County, Nebraska,

By G. C. Hill.

"It has been said that 'Civilization may destroy historic landmarks, but it cannot obliterate the records made by brave men." Observation confirms the truth of this statement. The deeds of men and women are indelibly recorded, and run through all subsequent history even though monuments erected to their memories may pass away.

In the light of this truism, I deem it time well spent, to take a backward glance over those events of past history, which are connected with our immediate locality and environment.

Many of these present have lived in Red Willow County but a short time. Others have been residents for many years, while a few here today, date their residence from the earliest period of its history.

I count it a great honor to be one of the latter class, and also a privilege to have this opportunity of telling my fellow-Kiwanians, from personal recollection and some research, something of the genesis and early history of our home county. Fate brought me into this world soon enough, and so disposed my parents' choice of residence, that I became, without volition of my own, one of the charter settlers of the county. Not as a homesteader, nor an asset to the man-power of the community, but rather as a distinct liability, as I was then but two years of age. I cannot say that my earliest recollection runs back to my first view of the Republican Valley, but I can recall certain personal experiences that occurred within a year or two thereafter.

The occupation and development of the great western two-thirds of this continent is, to my mind, the great American epic. Not more thrilling perhaps, than the settlement and progress of our forefathers along the eastern coast, and the later conquest of the middle states. But of far more interest to us of the West, for the reason that it has touched our lives more closely. The greatest day in history, for western men and women, was that upon which our great president, Abraham Lincoln, stood on the bluffs of the Missouri river, at the place we now know as Council Bluffs, Iowa, and pointing his finger westward, said 'Build the Union Pacific Railroad to the Pacific Ocean from this point.' That act of the president set in motion the great tide of immigration to Nebr., and other western states. And when that remarkable engineering feat had been accomplished in record time, the iron horse was closely followed by the settlers' prairie schooner and the plow.

The railroad was completed in 1868, and the river towns of Nebraska soon began to swarm with people from states farther east, all going west and anxious to possess the homesteads Uncle Sam had promised them.

Within a year or two, the eastern third of Nebraska had been settled to a considerable extent, and homesteaders were pushing farther west. By the fall of 1871, white men were exploring the upper reaches of the Republican River Valley, and the spring of 1872 saw the beginnings of actual settlement in what is now Red Willow County. By the end of that year there were scattered settlements along the river, across the county which had not then been organized. The number of families is not known but probably did not exceed a score. The following spring a larger number arrived, and the previous legislature having authorized the organization of several new counties in the western part of the state, Governor Robert W. Furnas, on May 1, 1873, appointed Edgar S. Hill, Washington Hinman, and Leslie H. Lawton, as Special Commissioners, charged with power to call an election for the selection of a county seat for Red Willow county, and temporary county officers. This election was held on May 27, 1873, in a log house on the claim of William Morris, now the J. J. Hadley home, in the valley some three miles west of the present city of Indianola. Personal notice was given each elector by one or other of the Governor's Commissioners. The vote cast was practically one hundred per cent of the eligible voting population. Sixty-three votes were cast at this election.

As soon as it became known that an election was to be held to organize the county, interest in the affair became intense, and bitter rivalry sprang up between two factions known as the Coon Creek and Red Willow Creek parties. The latter headed by Royal Buck, a Massachusetts Yankee, had explored the Valley late in the fall of 1871, and had then returned to Nebraska City for the winter. This party returned in the spring of 1872, with plans laid for the organization of the county, with their settlement at the mouth of the Willow as the future county seat. Coon Creek party had arrived at a point about 4 miles east a short time previously, equally determined to locate the county seat near their settlement.

Preceding the election, separate caucuses were held and tickets made up with lists of nominees for the various county offices. Feeling ran high and every voter was haled to the polls. The result of the election was favorable to the Coon Creek party, and vote showed that a site for the county seat had been selected near Coon Creek, on the claim of E. S. Hill. The temporary county officers elected at this time were I. J. Starbuck, Clerk; J. E. Berger, Treasurer; E. S. Hill, Judge; G. A. Hunter, Sheriff; G. B. Nettleton, County Superintendent; and W. H. Berger, B. F. Bradbury and W. S. Fitch, Commissioners. The election of E. S. Hill as County Judge, being conceded by all parties, he was deemed the proper person to administer the oath of office to the other officers. The first official meeting of the Board was held in a tent on Mr. Hill's homestead on June 13, 1873.

The territorial limits of Red Willow county, as defined by the legislature were the same as they now exist, the dimensions being 24 by 30 miles. The county seat and first town, received its name at the suggestion of Isaac J. Starbuck, in honor of Mr. Starbuck's home town of Indianola, Iowa. This gentleman was the County's first clerk, its first practicing attorney and also the first school teacher.

At this time, the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad had been built as far west as Kearney on the Platte, and its projectors were looking westward for an extension, some of the officials of the road had organized and incorporated the Republican Valley Land Association, and had sent out a townsite man to locate future towns and county seats. This man was D. N. Smith of

Burlington, Iowa, a former Methodist minister and railroad man. He appeared in the Valley driving a team of horses hitched to a democrat wagon. Mr. Smith and my father had been acquainted in Iowa, and this may have somewhat influenced the final selection of the county seat.

The first homestead on which final proof was made was my father's on which Indianola was located. Commutation proof was made in order to perfect a land title for the sale of town lots. The entryman not having sufficient funds to pay the required Government price of $1.25 per acre, he was given $200 in cash by Mr. Smith on behalf of the Land Association, and instructed to go to North Platte and make proof. These men also entered into a contract whereby Mr. Hill was to deed 80 acres of his land to Mr. Smith's company, and after the same had been platted for a townsite, he was to receive one-fourth of the lots in payment for the land. These arrangements were carried out faithfully, and the sale of the lots began.

To set operations in motion, the Town-site Company agreed to build and donate the use of a court house. It also agreed to build a hotel and a store building. This promise was carried out, the lumber and other materials being freighted in by team from Plum Creek, now Lexington, Nebraska. The court house was a frame structure 16 x 24 feet, one story high, and served its purpose until a more substantial building was erected a few years later. The hotel building was scarcely larger, but served its purpose admirably. The store building was a replica of the court house and was occupied by Woods & Allison with a stock of general merchandise. At the end of 1873 these three buildings made up the entire town, and were the center of the business, social and governmental activities for the entire county. Early the following spring, settlers arrived in considerable numbers, and a few other buildings were added.

The stream of homesteaders divided at Orleans, some of them going up the Beaver Valley, locating along that stream. At that time, settlement was confined to the valleys of the Republican, Red Willow and Beaver, but soon claims were taken on the divides.

The ill-feeling engendered by the location of the county seat was very bitter, and soon legal proceedings were begun to contest the election. Attorneys of some note were employed, and a preliminary trial was held in Justice of the Peace Colvin's court at Arapahoe. This resulted in a preliminary victory for the Red Willowites. Indianola immediately appealed the case to the District Court, and the second trial came before that court at Beaver City. Curiously enough, this second trial never came to issue. The plaintiffs did not appear to prosecute their case and after waiting four years for them to make an appearance, the presiding judge dismissed the case. It was never heard of again. However, the rival factions continued to quarrel, and the minutes of the Board reveal some highly dramatic and amusing incidents. The county records of those days can scarcely have been more extensive than the record of the frequent meetings held by the Commissioners. In fact, everything in the nature of records seems to have been contained in a single book.

The feeling existing in those days, may best be illustrated by quoting from the official record of the proceedings of the Board. It is interesting to note the frequency of these meetings, from which we may infer that these quarrels were the chief topic of interest for the entire community. I shall quote verbatim and at some length.

Oct. 7, 1873. On motion of B. F. Bradbury, the following to wit: J. F. Black, Leslie H. Lawton, A. S. Boyer, John Longnecker, J. H. Prickett, John G. Eaton, and D. E. Brothwell, were summoned to appear before the Board forthwith, to give testimony of, and concerning the felonious abstraction, from the office of the County Clerk of certain county property and that they bring and have with them, the said property. Sheriff Hunter receiving said summons for service.

Oct. 7, 1873, 1 p.m. Sheriff Hunter now makes return on summons. J. F. Black and John G. Eaton, in obedience to said summons, present themselves for examination. Separately examined and discharged.

Oct. 7, 1873, 7 p.m. Longnecker and Prickett presented themselves in obedience to summons, were separately sworn, examined and discharged.

Oct. 8, 1873, 9 a.m. Lawton and Brothwell presented themselves in obedience to summons, were separately sworn, examined and discharged.

Following these arduous but fruitless labors, the Board appears to have discontinued its daily sessions, for the next meeting is dated Oct. 18 and the record reads as follows: A letter of notice was directed to Lawton, Black and others, with reference to the certain county property abstracted from the office of the county clerk on Sept. 13, 1873. The record does not show a copy of this "letter of notice," and I regret that I am not able to quote from it. We may be sure, however, that this weighty communication was couched in proper legal phraseology and high-sounding terms, and that its demands were incapable of misconstruction.

Apparently the letter of notice issued on Oct. 18th failed to bear fruit, as we find that on Oct. 30th, the board took decisive steps to retrieve the missing property. The record is that on motion Commissioner Berger was instructed to consult with certain parties (names not mentioned in the record), supposed to know of the whereabouts of certain county property abstracted from the office of the county clerk on Sept. 13, 1873, and if possible, to get possession of the same. At a later meeting on the same day, we read that "Commissioner Berger reported county property found and returned the same." There is a tradition among the old settlers, that the missing property was found hidden in a haystack. Thus ended happily, this opera bouffe between Indianola and Red Willow for possession of the early archives of the county.

Mr. Starbuck, the county clerk, was a man of some legal attainments, and possessed of untiring zeal for the duties of his office. His minutes of the Board meetings are replete with legal phrases couched in choice language, and written in bold flourishes, typical of the handwriting of that day. The Commissioners and Clerk, all young men, and without experiences in office, evidently took their jobs most seriously.

On Oct. 30, 1873, the Board instructed the Clerk to negotiate for the purchase of a stove for county use. To make their instructions complete they further authorized him to offer in payment, county orders at eighty cents on the dollar. This transaction may seem ludicrous to us today, but we must remember the circumstances under which this weighty business was transacted. There was probably not a single stove or box of matches for sale, nearer than Lowell, Nebraska, some eighty miles away. The County had absolutely no funds, no tax having as yet been assessed or collected. The County Treasurer held the portfolio without duties or salary, as no money had come into his hands. I can imagine the feelings of the officers as they sat in the court house that chilly October day, with no fire in the building, with winter near, and no stove in which to burn the firewood they might have cut on the classic Coon Creek. And to make their troubles the more depressing, there was the added doubt concerning the new county's credit with those merchants in the distant town, who had stoves to sell. There certainly is a touch of sagacity as well as of humor in the offer to issue a county order, or what I think was meant, a certificate of indebtedness, for the stove, at the attractive concession of eighty cents on the dollar, and I have no doubt, it was this liberal offer which made the stove a possibility.

At an early meeting on August 2, 1873, the prime necessities of life having become a matter of grave concern to the Board, on motion, it unanimously voted the following order:

"It is hereby ordered, that license for the sale of malt, spirituous and vinous liquors in Red Willow County, be granted and issued to any person applying for the same, upon payment of a license fee of $300 and the furnishing of bond for $5,000." This thoughtful provision for the needs of their fellow-citizens and themselves, does not seem to have broken the drouth for on Jan. 6, of the following year, "On motion, the license fee for the sale of malt, vinous and spirituous liquors, be and hereby is, reduced from $300 to $50 per annum." This salutary action produced results, for on March 7, 1874, one Zeri H. Sherman, whom I remember very well, filed a petition with bond for a license. Without undue delay the Board granted the license, but refused to accept Mr. Sherman's bond. The mere detail of a bond, however, was not permitted to long retard needed relief. The bond matter was adjusted and Mr. Sherman achieved the honor of becoming the first licensed dispenser of liquid thirst remover in Red Willow County.

In the absence of official records, it was often impossible to determine legal right to lands, and the rightful occupants of claims. Therefore, on Jan. 6th, 1874, W. S. Fitch was empowered to employ W. D. Wildman to procure from the Government Land office, a list of lands in the county upon which entry and proof had been made. This was made necessary by the confusion resulting from the rapid location and frequent jumping of claims. A short time later, the Board accepted the proposal of L. S. Holbrook to furnish a map of the county and a set of field notes, for the sum of $125, payable in certificates of indebtedness.

On April 7, 1874, the first public road in the county, was located on the north side of the river. Page T. Francis was instructed to survey and plan this road. Other roads to various parts of the county soon followed. At this meeting the salary of the county clerk was fixed at $200 per annum, and this munificent salary was regarded as sinecure by the incumbent.

Justices of the Peace, constables, precinct assessors, road overseers and school officers having been appointed, nearly every man in the county held one or more offices. On April 21, 1874, the record informs us, the Board undertook the equalization of the first property assessment for taxes. It is interesting to note this procedure, fifty-three years after the event. William Overacker's assessment on nursery stock was reduced from $300 to $100. I should very much like to know whether any of these trees lived and grew to bear fruit. J. F. Black's assessment on cattle was reduced from $250 to $213, while that of Russell Loomis was reduced from $290 to $225. Action on these three items seems to have consumed the entire session for that day. But on the day following, with the experience gained the day before, the Board was able to equalize 74 assessments, each one being raised from one to seventy-five dollars. Evidently, the Board had changed its system over night. The names of these tax-payers as spread on the records, constitute almost a complete directory of the county. Thus, increasing taxes began to appear at the very inception of the taxation in this county, and have continued in almost geometrical progression even unto this day.

At this meeting, the following persons were taxed for property omitted from the assessor's returns: Wm. Brooks, 1 wagon, $40; W. T. Stone, 1 wagon, $15; Jesse Ashton, 1 iron cane mill, $75.

There were cattle barons in those days, for we learn of a few large herds. T. P. Thomas' assessment on "neat cattle" was raised from $1660 to $1968. Henry Berger's valuation on similar "neat cattle" was also raised from $2250 to $3152, while John Kelley's was reduced from $310 to $164.

On July 6, 1874, the first tax levy was made, containing the following items: State levy 6¼ mills; Ordinary county levy for all purposes, 5 mills, county sinking fund, 5 mills. A total levy of 16¼ mills for all tax purposes. It will be remembered that at this time, there were no levies for village, town or city purposes, nor for schools or bond issues. These refinements of organized society came later. In addition to these small levies, a road poll tax of $2 was imposed on men under fifty years of age, payable in cash or with one day's work. Also a Road Land Tax of $4 per quarter section, likewise payable in cash or labor at $2 per day. The value of Red Willow county property in 1874 as returned by the assessors, was as follows: Personal property $56,316,50; 4,962.61 acres of deeded land at $2 per acre, $9,905.22; 80 acres of town lots in Indianola, owned entirely by two parties, the Republican Valley Land Association and E. S. Hill, were valued at a total of $514.50. The total assessment was $66,736.22, and of this but little more than ten thousand dollars was real estate. The total valuation of the county for 1926 was $21,174,485.00. According to the books of the county treasurer this first assessment produced a maximum tax that two years later, the total of delinquent tax was reported at less than $500.

Opposite the names of two taxpayers, appear the following notations: "Paid dog tax $1.12, under protest" and "Refused to pay dog tax of $1.12." The tax of $1.12 on a dog would indicate an assessed valuation of $68.92 per dog.

On October 31, 1874, the clerk was instructed to order "one bunch, or one-half ream of legal cap paper for county use." On March 20, 1875, the Board called a special election for the election of a delegate to a Constitutional Convention at Lincoln on May 11th. Although Red Willow county had a candidate, another man from Furnas county was chosen.

To any who knew the men whose actions made history of these early days, these old records are most interesting. For others, they will perhaps, have no special appeal. I am tempted to quote at greater length, but will restrain myself, and confine further quotation to a resolution appearing in the minutes of a meeting held on June 5, 1875. Up to this time no deaths and very few births had occurred in the community. That death loves a shining mark, was again illustrated by the untimely removal by a stroke of lightning, of William H. Berger, the county's richest citizen, and the chairman of the county board. Mr. Berger was a man of prominence in the community, not only as an official, but also by reason of his social standing and financial position as the heaviest tax-payer. His death was a great shock to the community. Due notice of Mr. Berger's passing was taken by the Board in the following resolution: "Whereas, Providence in His Divine Wisdom, having taken from us violently, our much-esteemed and efficient chairman and brother commissioner, W. H. Berger, be it resolved, that while we acquiesce in the wisdom and power of the Almighty, we sincerely and deeply regret our loss, and the loss of this county, and extend our full and heartfelt sympathy to the family of our departed friend."

This resolution was an expression of the feelings of every man, woman and child of understanding age, in the county. The funeral was attended by the entire population, and I remember it well. I have never been present on a more solemn occasion. This funeral was in the days before churches, store caskets, florists and hearses had arrived. My father made a pine coffin for this man out of such scraps of boards as he could pick up, and the funeral car was a common farm wagon. But the solemnities of the occasion were in no way marred by these limitations.

I should like to go into detail regarding the social life of that early period, and of the neighborliness that existed, and the fine though simple social gatherings. It all comes back to me with the vividness of recent occurrence. But time does not permit of further reminiscence, and a recital of these things would perhaps not interest those who have never experienced the joys and sorrows of pioneer life.

I should also like to tell of the Indian scare of 1875, when word was sent round by horsemen of the proximity of a large band of warlike Indians, said to be headed for our settlement. And how the settlers and their families gathered at the court house one beautiful Sabbath morning, with such arms as they possessed. How the local orator, Major R. H. Criswell, a most striking figure, mounted a wagon and in fervid sentences breathing fire and defiance, called on the men to take up arms against the red devils and drive them into the very gates of hell, etc. etc. It was a very exciting time, but the alarm proved to be false and nothing happened.

The prairies were white with buffalo bones, and living buffaloes could be seen at any time of day in immense herds, traveling to the river for water, and then scattering in all directions to graze on the limitless prairies. I can see them yet, great humped, shaggy animals, now motionless, now in swift flight, with some hunter in hot pursuit. Such memories can never be effaced. Another memory that lingers is of the terrible fires that often swept across the country. They were the most dreaded of all dangers that beset the settlers. While marauding bands of Indians sometimes committed acts of petty thievery, and gave us scares, the fires were terrifying and destructive. Many a time we had to fight these fires to the point of physical exhaustion, to save our homes and fields. Pastures were frequently burned over, which was a real calamity.

If I should tell the whole truth about the grasshoppers and their depredations, I should qualify myself in your minds, for membership in the local Ananias Club. I can assure you, however, that these stories could hardly be exaggerated. The year of 1876, when the scant crops were looking their best and most promising, was the year of the greatest grasshopper plague. The pests suddenly appeared in great clouds that obscured the sun and for two days were present in such numbers that the sky was almost black. Suddenly they alighted and attacked the growing crops in such numbers that everything was eaten to the ground in one day, scarcely even stumps remaining. Not a vestige of green leaf or stalk remained. So greedy were the hoppers that wood-handled tools were gnawed until they were too rough to use.

In later years, certain tellers of tales were wont to somewhat exaggerate, in their recitals of grasshopper days and whether acts of cannabalism were actually committed by the pests, I can most solemnly assure you that what actually happened was almost beyond belief. There were in lesser numbers a particular breed of hoppers which we knew as quarter-pounders, from their immense size. It is within the truth to say that these visitors were often three inches in length and an inch thick, and they would eat anything green with the avidity of a hungry cow.

Then there were the hot winds and the dry summers. Scientists tell us that climate does not change. I cannot believe this, as I am positive we have never seen in recent years, such extreme climatic conditions as were common in those early days.

Red Willow county passed through the "horse-thief" stage of development, when the theft of a $10 horse was the blackest crime a man could commit. I recall these hectic years, when a certain coterie of hard-boiled men terrorized the community, stole horses with immunity, and considered themselves above all law. Innocent men were sometimes suspected of their crimes and some of them were forced to leave the country. This lawless condition finally passed away. The horse thieves were driven out and compelled to seek more congenial climes. One of the notable men of those days, and a power for law and order, was District Judge William Caslin of Alma. The judge was a most eccentric character as well as a keen lawyer and a splendid judge. He had an abiding antipathy for two classes of criminals, horse thieves and husbands whose wives sought justified divorce. In such cases, the judge never hesitated to deal out extreme penalties with the least possible delay.

The first murder trial in the county created a great sensation. A man named Ackerman was arrested for the killing of a neighbor named Scott, who was accused of having jumped another settler's claim. As I remember the defendant was acquitted. Troubles over land were frequent and often very bitter.

Political contests were if possible, more bitter and fought with greater intensity then than now. Elections were notable for their heat, and when in the early '80s, the contest over the removal of the county seat to McCook was fought out, that memorable struggle climaxed political strife in the county. The resulting ill-feeling between Indianola and McCook continued for many years, but happily, has now all but disappeared.

There were land booms and building booms in those days. Settlers came in large numbers, attracted by the opportunity to secure homes, and towns grew to care for the commercial needs of a larger population. The vacant homestead lands were nearly all filed upon in a few years. The Burlington railroad was pushed thru to Indianola, where it halted for one year, then was completed through to Denver. Larger and better crops were raised, more wealth became manifest, and the county took on the appearance and substance of a civilized community. The whole story is too long, and I should travel too far afield in all the telling.

I know of no more fitting close to these remarks, than the reading of some lines from the pen of a Red Willow county product, and a boyhood friend of mine. This man, William H. Hotze, came to the county an infant in arms, was reared and educated in the county schools and a Nebraska college, and is now a successful insurance man in Cleveland, Ohio. I do not pretend to judge the quality of my friend's poetic fancy, but I know he is well qualified by early environment and observation, to know his subject. I think he has caught the spirit of the early western country in which he grew to manhood, and I believe he pens a true picture of the prairies and their evolution into this favored land which we of today call HOME.

THE PROCESSIONAL

(By William Hotze)

THE RIVER

From a low sand hill burst a bubbling spring,
A winding rivulet it pushed its way
Thru a languid course in the barren waste,
A widening valley bade it enter and turn
On its merry way toward the rising sun,
Other springs bubbled and other rills joined
Till a gladsome brook it galloped along
Thru a welcoming country of rolling hills.
The song birds came and the trees sprang up
As it widened to a stream of sweeping bends
With willow fringed banks and cottonwood groves.
So a broad shallow river of crystal hue
Sped over sandbar and shoal with rippling song.

Or, storm lashed it churned the yellowish sand,
Leaped, changed channel and surged against
The opposing bank with thundering roar,
But returned in time to its own quiet self.
So the water passed on but the river remained,
A Life-giving force in a desolate land.

The Buffalo

When grasses reached upland the buffalo came.
In great herds and long files they sauntered along,
Large rangy beasts with high hump above,
Decked with brown shaggy coats and short stubby horns.
They grazed as they roamed down valley, over hill,
Cropping short upland grasses or browsing along stream.
Moving northward in summer, returning in fall
Wearing deep winding paths from wallow to pool.
Nature's well preserved balance they helped to preserve.
Undisturbed in their peace till the Indian came,
Or the hunter made havoc and scattered the herd,
Of that once countless number now nothing remains
—But a few captive bands.

The Indian

Then trod the lone Indian with arrow and spear,
From a far distant land and a region unknown,
He sang as he came to the twang of his bow,
Caught a glimpse of the valley with plentiful game
Turned, beckoned his tribesmen to follow along.
Pitched tepee on hilltop, in valley at will.
From season to season he followed the herd
Of buffalo, deer, elk and swift antelope
And fished from the waters of river or brook.
Making friend of the horse from settler strayed
He rode in the chase or in fierce war array.
So, proudly he ruled the wild boundless realm,
At last passing on to the land in the west
Leaving campsite strewn with flint arrowheads.

THE TRAPPER

On the heels of the Indian the trapper came,
Made his lodge in the valley of beaver-dam stream,
Stripped the soft silky fur from the animal's back,
Robbed badger, coon, skunk of warm winter coat,
Stretched them all on the door of his odorous shack,
Left a trail of destruction and havoc and dread,
Like him was the hunter who hounded the plain,
Killing thousands of bison for only the hide,
Attacking lone Indian who stood in his way
Left rash ruthless deeds charged to settlers' account,
What a blessing to all had he never appeared—
Left no monument he, but bleached buffalo bones.

THE HERDSMAN

Then followed the cowboy from Mexican plain,
He sat on his broncho urging onward the steer,
In springtime rode northward to fatten his stock,
With the twirl of his lasso and crack of his whip
Held sway over cattle of long tapering horns,
Nothing he feared with his gun at his side
But the dread Texas fever depleting the herd,
The shepherd unwelcome in cattleman's range,
Kept his flock in the mountains or more distant land,
For the cattlemen's range was his by his might
And woe to intruder who dared to trespass.
The times changed, the herdsman passed and
There died in the distance the sound of his hoof.

THE SETTLER

After Indian, trapper, herder, the settler appeared.
In ox-drawn wagon to the valley he came,
Built his log cabin near the welcoming stream,
Making friend of the climate, exploring the land,
Tamed its rough upturned sod into rich fertile soil,
Bringing seed, plant and tree from distant state
He battled against drought and grasshopper pest,
To be baffled no longer with quicksand and flood.

He saddled the river with bridges to cross.
He bridled its waters against famishing drought,
He girdled the valley with line of steel rails,
Discarding old stage-coach and slow wagon train,
Warding off the Indian, upholding the law,
Laying out village, building schoolhouse and church,
Persisting undaunted, he prevailed over all.
What a bulwark of nations, that brave pioneer.
A great monument his, an empire founded, preserved.
So stood the old settler and for ages shall stand,
"As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

WILLIAM HOTZE,
1722 Keith Bldg.
Cleveland, Ohio.

Chapter IX

History of First Settlements and Organization of Decatur County on the South in 1872

IN THIS chapter our author crosses over the formerly bloody border and copies for publication a history of Decatur County Kansas. The name was, and is popular, in several states based upon the courage and patriotic evidence of our early navy in the region where Americans with the other allies have been doing service in liberating the citizens of the South Mediterranean. It will be recalled the Decatur said "My Country; may it be always right, but right or wrong, – my Country."

This gracious act by Mr. Stilgebouer will undoubtedly he highly appreciated by his neighbors across the way.

Decatur County, Kansas

Decatur county, Kansas, joins Red Willow county on the south, the Beaver entering Red Willow county east of near Cedar Bluffs, Kansas. By reason of this, those living south of Danbury and Lebanon in Kansas did their trading and marketing at our towns, Danbury and Lebanon, and were identified as neighbors in our work and progress of winning the west. The Beaver Valley being about midway between the Union Pacific on the North and the Kansas Pacific on the South, both Frontier county, Nebraska, and Decatur county, Kansas, were settled to some extent on the streams before Red Willow county. John Bratt in his "Trails of Yesterday" gives a very interesting account of the organization of Frontier county in January 1872, by settlers coming from the North. Mrs. Harvey of Oberlin, Kansas in 1910 wrote a brief and very interesting history of the early settlements of Decatur county, Kansas, the early settlers largely coming from the South via the Kansas Pacific. We feel it is well and ably written, true to the facts, and deserves a place in this history by reason of close identification with and community sharing of incidents and progress. The record as written by Mrs. Harvey now follows, with my comments at its close.

Early History of Decatur County, Kansas, as Compiled and Written by Mrs. S. J. Harvie.

(Taken from the Oberlin, Kansas, Herald's Sixtieth Anniversary Edition of June 15, 1939)

The following history of the settlement of Decatur County was written by Mrs. Harvie in 1910, *and any attempted history of the county would not be complete without including Mrs. Harvie's account.*

The summer of 1872 saw the western plains of Kansas literally covered with buffalo. And men who were not hunters but homeseekers in the central part of the state came in parties to get meat for their families and also to dry (called jerked meat), which they could sell in the eastern market with the hides for a good price, and was a help to them to buy the necessary clothing and coffee and tobacco.

On their return to their homes they told of the beautiful valleys of the Beaver, Sappa and Prairie Dog, which ran through Decatur county which was also touched by the Solomon in the southeast corner.

As the U. P. Railroad was only ninety miles on the north and the K. P. R. W. fifty-five miles on the south it was supposed to be safe from hostile Indians, as troops could be rushed in on either road to protect the settlers. (They figured without thinking of red tape). And as a survey had been made of the northwest counties that summer quite a number of those men returned and filed on land and trapped the winter of 1872 and 1873. Among the number was W. D. Street, who has represented our county several times and has held other important offices in the state. He is with us yet, hale and hearty, the only one remaining of those he came in with.

Early in the fall of 1872 Colonel J. A. Hopkins, a man of good education, a civil engineer, a forty-niner, a man who had lost his wife and children, and who was soured on the world, accompanied by Del Coburn and Henry Playford, came in from Cawker City. S. Porter and John Griffin came in from Nebraska and joined the Cawker City party for mutual protection and trapped the winter of 1873.

In December of 1872 a party of four, consisting of Uncle Ben Lewis, C. J. Lewis, H. P. Gandy, and W. D. Street visited the Sappa valley, selected land and became residents of Decatur county.

The boundaries of the county were defined by the legislature of 1873. The name was given to it by Major J. T. Morrison, representative from Smith County, at the suggestion of Capt. Wm. Decatur Covington, who had visited the county.

The U. S. Land Office records show that Samuel M. Porter filed on S.E.¼ 29-2-28, December 16, 1872, John Griffin, N.E.¼ 29-2-28, December 16, 1872, Henry Playford N.W.¼ 28-2-28, December 16, 1872, Del Coburn, S.W.¼ 28-2-28, December 16, 1872. The Porter and Coburn land is now owned by Geo. M. Miller. Settlement was made by Col. James A. Hopkins on the S.W.¼ 12-2-28, December 28, 1872.

J. A. Rodehaver made settlement on the S.W.¼ 1-3-29 April 29, 1873 and proved up on the same December 1, 1873. He had the north one hundred acres platted and surveyed April 1874, called Westfield, now known as Original Oberlin. It was the second claim proved up on.

David Sherrad proved up on his land, which was part of 28-1-27, and 4th of October, 1873, thus having the honor of being the first one to prove up on land in Decatur county.

The spring of 1873 saw quite an emigration to Decatur county. To the Sappa came Robert Bridle and family, Mr. Humphrey and family, Charles Canfield and family, Sheppard Farren and family, and Mr. Austin and family. In the early spring H. P. Gandy brought his wife and she was the first white woman to live in the county. She was mother of the second white child born in the county, which was born in July 1873. She shot herself through the foot in the early fall and was taken to Logan where she died soon after her arrival there. The child lived for several months and died.

Among the ones that came in that summer was Mr. Austin, who died in December, 1873, the first white grown person to die in the county. A two weeks old babe of Canfield's was buried the 21st of September, 1873, the first white person buried in the county.

The latter part of the winter of 1872, there were two trappers stayed on the Beaver, Joe Dimmick, and another man whose name is forgotten, on what is now Cedar Bluffs. The summer of 1873, there came on the Beaver James Jones, Lem Daniels, Clarence and Joseph Dimmick and their father, Ike Bowen and father, Dave Royce, Pat Rathbun, James Addis, Joe Turby, and Frank Kimball.

In the fall the McKinzie and Hemper families came in and Clarence Dimmick and Julia McKinzie were the first couple to be married in that settlement.

Of the men who had families east, and single men, on the Sappa, were J. A. Rodehaver, Wm. Love, Robert Riley, W. Richardson, Ben Lewis, John Payton, Joe Woods, J. A. Hopkins, Dave Hemp, and Vance Sherrard, Capt. Allen, Fred Douglass, Elmore Allen, L. M. and W. H. Andrews, Oscar Bass, J. D. Wickham, Tom Sorick, Lute Holingsworth, W. W. Hopkins, Lee Mowry, Lambert Snyder, Wm. Tubbs, ———— Stanfield, Abe Cox, Joseph Bryson, Dave Hopkins, A. J. Cox, and probably some whose names have been forgotten.

On the Prairie Dog were Sol Rees, Bill Rose, Ed O'Brien, Bill Quinn, John Worval, Geo. Shultz, and several whose names have passed from memory. Of married men were a Mr. Win and family and Stuttering Smith, who drove an ox team and had one cow, which they took with them when they visited their near neighbors on the Sappa.

April 17, 1873, there came to Big Timber, a tributary of the Prairie Dog, a small colony of Bohemians from near Omaha, Nebraska. They were Joseph Cilek, Wenzel Rohan, Wm. Heilman, Wenzel Skalok, Joseph Wenzel, Jacob Wenzel, Anton, Frank, Louis and Joe Blecha.

To Joseph Cilek and wife was born a girl, the 2nd of June, 1873, the first white child born in the county. They named her Jasea and she is now the wife of Wm. Stramp, a well to do farmer who lives near Jennings, and she is the mother of a fine family of children.

Robert Riley, Wm. Love and John Stiner and families arrived the 12th of September 1873. J. A. Rodehaver's wife and babies came the 21st from Athens county, Ohio and then coming over from Buffalo Park the team had to stop when near the Saline to let a herd of buffalo pass.

Mr. Rodehaver had a log house built for us with a shingle roof and a board floor, the first house built west of Norton Center. It was only 16 x 18 feet but it looked larger then than our opera house does now.

George Miller lived with us the first winter and as it may interest the ladies to know how we managed to get along in one room with three grown people and three children I will tell them.

We had one large bed with a trundle bed for the children which we pushed under the large bed in the day time, and made a bunk on the wall out of poles about three feet from the floor and put our groceries, flour, etc., underneath and George occupied the bunk of nights for a bed.

Our table was made out of a side of a large box with hewn poles for legs and had a cupboard made of lumber left from the house. Our bookcase was a small dry goods box nailed to the wall. We had brought a sewing machine, dresser, and bedding for four beds and how we stowed everything away and had plenty of room to get around, I can't hardly see, as we had no other place to store anything.

We only had two meals a day that winter as none of us could get enough sleep, and it was no variety in meals, one day was about the same as another. Our breakfast was served about 9 a.m. Coffee without milk, gravy, biscuit, syrup, and meat, and when we made a change it was fried mush. Our mid-afternoon meal was buffalo meat stewed with dumplings made out of biscuit dough, which was made up with what the hunters called sourings—flour, water and yeast mixed together and let stand 'till sour—beans stewed with salt pork or rice, and for company we added dried apples or prunes. For six months we did not have milk, butter, or eggs. Everything but the buffalo meat had to be hauled from Cawker City, 125 miles away.

The land office was at that place then and all land business had to be transacted there, and our provisions could be bought there when they had to go to the land office. Kirwin had two stores at that time but everything was freighted there and it was cheaper to load at Cawker City.

The spring of 1874 saw quite a number of emigrants come in. Among them were George Benson and family, Peter Johnson and family, Henry Anthony and family, J. A. VanWormer and family (Vanwormer brought Nigger Sam along with him, our first colored inhabitant), Gus Carlson, Will Ufford, and Jule Ufford. The latter soon tired of the west and returned to New York, but in a short time he returned with his wife and they have stayed through drouths and good seasons ever since.

There was quite a number on the Beaver and below us on the Sappa but I do not know their names.

Warren Jennings came to the Prairie Dog in April, 1874, from Red Oak, Iowa, accompanied by John Green and family, a son-in-law, and settled near where Jennings is now, leaving his family and goods at Belleville, Kansas. He brought some lumber from Belvidere, Nebraska, and went to Kearney, Nebraska, for two loads more to complete the house, which was the first frame house west of Norton. The Jennings' were of that class of people that shed a bright and good influence to all that knew them. The father and mother have gone to their reward but the children are all living and doing well. Bedford Jennings is one of the leading business men of Jennings.

George Shoemaker and several others came in and settled near Shibboleth in the spring of 1874.

We petitioned the government for a postoffice to be called Sappa and to be established at what is now Oberlin in February, 1874, and for mail service from Norton. Our wishes were granted and J. A. Rodehaver was appointed postmaster and his wife assistant. In March, with snow on the ground, they drove to Squire Oliver's one mile southwest of Norton to take the oath of office. The mail service by way of Long Branch and Lyle was commenced the 3rd of July, Jack Brooks carrier. It was soon extended to Connersville northwest on the Beaver, Frank Kimball, postmaster.

In June Loge Booth killed a boy known as the kid, supposed to be connected with stealing horses.

The grasshoppers came the last of July and took everything, even the onions, and biting the babies' faces. They left us with only hay for our stock.

But we had plenty of poultry, milk, butter and eggs, and got along quite well with the exception that several families left the county.

Early in the fall Charles Canfield, a hunter who had his family on a homestead that is now part of the John Love farm, followed the buffalo west for a load of hides. Weeks went by and no word came from them or him.

His wagon with the hides on it had been found north of Wallace and by it lay the skeleton of a man with a bullet hole in the head back of the ear, where he had been shot from behind. They hauled the skeleton, load and wagon to Wallace.

His wife, with a two weeks old babe in her arms, went to Buffalo Park, sixty-five miles, in a wagon and then to Wallace by railroad. She identified the wagon from among sixty-five that were in the corrall and the skeleton as Canfield's by the teeth. She brought the bones home and our cemetery was started. His grave is unmarked and soon no one will know where it is. Why not put his name on the monument with those killed in 1878?

December of 1874 and January and February of 1875 George Worthington taught a subscription school in a dug-out in the east part of what is now East Oberlin, vacated by J. A. Vanwormer, who had finished and moved into his frame building in town, the first real store in the county.

The spring of 1875 a mail route was established from Red Willow, Nebraska to Buffalo Park, Kansas, by way of Oberlin, and a postoffice was established at Shibboleth with Isaac Peck as postmaster. We began to think we were in civilization again.

The Texas cattle trail was moved from the east line of Norton county to eight miles west of Oberlin, and it was interesting to see those herds of five thousand and sometimes more go over the trail. They went to Ogallalla to feed the Indians and establish the great stock ranches of Colorado.

Everything planted that summer did well. The grasshoppers took a narrow strip north and south through the center of the county, but with the exception of that we had a bounteous crop.

The summer of 1875 was our first marriage. The contracting parties were Calvin Gay, 65 years and Maggie Robinson, age 15 years. Vanwormer having been appointed by the governor to act as Squire, he performed the ceremony.

And Lee Moury won the love of Mary Ellen, daughter of Matt Montgomery, but the father needed the girl for housekeeper and was not willing for Lee to have her, but friends aided them and they eloped to Beaver City in a road wagon hauled by an ox team and were married there. They spent their honeymoon on the range catching buffalo calves for eastern parties.

The winter of 1875 and 1876 was a very pleasant winter with the exception of one cold spell in January. The buffalo grass was fine. Cattle were as fat as if fed corn. The 6th of March, George Gippe and Ada Umphry were married at noon and at seven Will Ufford and Myra Love.

George Gippe was killed some time after by two of the Driscoll boys with clubs. The trouble was over Driscoll's cattle destroying Gippe's feed.

We lost our crops again that season and the Custer massacre caused us to be uneasy about the Indians, and we thought we might have to leave.

We had no school that winter. A few literarys and dances were our only amusements.

The grasshoppers had deposited their eggs, millions of them in the fall and in the spring they commenced to hatch out. It looked as if we would lose all again. But the 29th of April there came a storm of snow, sleet and rain, lasting three days and by the time it stopped the young grasshoppers were dead, the dirt roofs were leaking until it was dryer out of doors than in, and again we had a crop that gave us hopes of a great future for our county.

In June Baldwin Riley, one of our most highly respected young men, went to work on the Webber cattle ranch, (where Atwood now is), and in a few days he was reported missing. Search was made for him, and two weeks later he was found. He had been shot and it has never been known by whom, some thought by Indians, some by a horse thief, who had escaped from Norton jail and who had sworn vengeance on Frank Webber, who had him arrested for stealing horses, and sorrow came not only to relatives but to all of us that knew him. We had an epidemic of Typho malaria fever that summer, but thanks to the skill and care of Mrs. Dr. Story Briggs who stayed with us until almost all were around, none died of the fever. She lived, at that time, several miles below Devises mill.

That fall saw our first threshing machines. Heretofore we had used a flail or tramped grain out with horses.

Eva Vancleave taught our school the summer of 1878.

We built our log school house that fall and Cavit Miller taught school the following winter and Rev. Ruben Bisbee of the M.E. church preached once a month in it.

With the spring of 1878 came a large immigration to the county, young men, old men, married men and single men from as far east as Marblehead, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and from nearly every state in the union. The men who had families came along to prepare the homes before they brought their families. It was an ideal summer. About the middle of the summer the families commenced coming in. All were hopeful and happy in the thought of having a home of their own and with no thought of danger for them and theirs, when, like a bolt of lightning out of the clear sky, came the Massacre of September 30, 1878, by Dull Knife's band of Cheyennes who after the Custer massacre in the Black Hills, had been moved south into the Indian Territory. They left the reservation followed by Major Mauk with five companies of the Fourth U. S. Cavalry and two companies of the Nineteenth Infantry.

The troops had a skirmish with the Indians the 28th, south of the U. P. Railroad. In that engagement Colonel Lewis had been killed and, for some cause unknown to the writer, the troops failed to force the Indians back to their reservation, or to stop them from coming on their trip of carnage.

They committed their first act of violence on Sunday the 29th, on the north fork of the Solomon, at two immigrant boys who got away from them and came to the Prairie Dog, the one that was shot died the next day. The comrade came in about 8:00 a.m., the morning of the 30th for a doctor, and reported about the Indians being south of us, but no one believed it to be true, thinking the trouble had been some other cause.

There were several teams and men starting for Buffalo Park, expecting their families to arrive there by the time the teams would get there from Oberlin. They were getting provisions for their trip, and the men from the claims were getting theirs for the week. When the Indian scouts came on the hill south of town and saw such a crowd of men they turned west. We saw them but took them to be men hunting corner stone. They struck the Texas cattle trail, crossed the South Sappa and went into camp west of the Anthony homestead, at that time known as the Keifer ranch.

Soon after seeing the scouts Wat Smith came into town with Joe Rabb and family with the horses on a run, the tire off one wheel, it had come off at the Street farm, a mile above Oberlin. He brought the news that himself, father and John Hudson were making hay on the place owned by Mrs. Lydia Barnes, sister of the famous "Wild Bill," the Indians rode up out of a draw, coming toward Colvin's, they shot Hudson dead and Wat supposed his father also, but when the party went on the next day to gather up the dead they found Smith still alive with three wounds and four arrows in his body. He was still living but died that night, some 36 hours after he was wounded. Wat escaped by getting into a channel of the creek, following it down to Joe Rabb's claim now owned by Daily, who got it from Joe Bivans. He got Mrs. Rabb and the two children, Rabb was making hay east of the house and ran east until they came in sight of Rabb and came to them and they came on to Smith's and to town.

The settlers killed that day were: G. F. Walter, F. M. Abernathy, ——— Lull, Ferdinand Wesfall and son, Marcelus Felt, John Irwin, E. P. Humphrey, John C. Hudson, John Wright, Ed Miskelly, James G. Smith, Wm. Laing, John C. Laing, Wm. Laing, Jr.

John Humphrey was wounded but got away from them and was brought to Rodehaver's who, with his mother, cared for him the four weeks he suffered till death relieved him. Their pay was the thanks of his widowed mother.

They killed Miskelly, who lived at Grainfield, north of the north fork of the sappa. He was on his way home from taking Dowling to his herd of cattle, which were going over the trail north. From the Sappa they went on to the Beaver, killing fourteen, destroying homes, outraging women and doing all that their hellish nature was capable of.

Among the number killed on the Beaver was Frederick Hemper, one of our first settlers. He was in company with Pat Rathburn when they met some of the Indians who shook hands with them as they passed them. Pat heard a gun click and threw himself to one side of the pony and the bullet intended for him went between his body and arm, through his coat. Hemper was instantly killed. Pat got into a draw where he had protection and kept them at bay for several hours. When night came, he made his escape. (He afterwards married Hemper's widow).

Sol Reese was at Kirwin when the word came that the Indians were on a raid. He traveled the 75 miles that night to his place near Jackson, on the Prairie Dog, came on to Oberlin in the morning and got some men to go with him and he followed the Indians, caught up with three north of the north fork of the Sappa and was able to get one of them which Sol scalped. Sol went on with the troops as scout, staying with them twenty days.

The settlers came into Oberlin and stayed till all danger was over from more Indians getting away from the territory. They dug rifle pits and prepared for further trouble, as reports of a threatening nature came in most every day. We also looked for trouble from horse thieves as there were some here just before the raid and there were some fine teams of horses and mules that had lately been brought in and had escaped the Indians. All suspicious characters were made to leave the town and pickets were kept out at nights. The men would go and kill the first calf they came to. The women baked bread day and night, Uncle Billy Love heading the beef supply and Aunt Mandy, his wife, the cooking of the beef, bread and coffee at Rodehaver's. At Captain Allen's store was as big a crowd engineered by the Captain and his capable wife.

They fetched in the dead and put them in the school house, made pine boxes, wrapped them in sheets and laid them to rest in the cemetery on the hill. The families went east to their friends as soon as the money could be sent to them to come. Quite a number of our settlers, that escaped the raid, left our country for east, but lots more came in that fall and took their place.

The last legislature appropriated fifteen hundred dollars for a monument for those killed in Decatur county. The bill was put through by J. D. Flanigan, our representative.

H. D. Colvin taught the school the winter 1878-79.

The summer of '79 the people were getting anxious for the county to be organized. Two hundred and fifty voters signed a petition to the governor of our state, John P. St. John, asking that Decatur County be organized, showing by the census taken by John Neaves, that there were fifteen hundred inhabitants in the county. He granted their petition appointing Oberlin temporary county seat and J. B. Hitchcock, Frank Kimbal and Geo. W. Shoemaker commissioners and Ed Stillson county clerk.

The first meeting of the county commissioners was held December 15, 1879, the business transacted was ordering special election to be held the 3rd of February, 1880, to decide where the county seat should be, and to elect officers for the county, to hold till the regular election, which was in the fall. They appointed voting places at: Hemp Sherrads for the eastern part of the county; on the Beaver, at Mrs. Mary Hemper's; Bassettville, Bassettville school house; Prairie Dog, George Shoemaker, school house; Jennings, Jennings school house; Oberlin, Oberlin school house.

Decatur Center was Oberlin's only opponent in the contest. Oberlin, on the 6th day of February, 1880, was declared the county seat of Decatur county by a majority of 56 votes. The officers elected were: Commissioners: Frank Kimball, Henry Clare, and J. C. Johnston. County clerk: N. G. Addelman. Register of Deeds: Geo. W. Keys. Probate Judge: Luther Brown. Sheriff: W. A. Frasier. Treasurer: George A. Metcalf. County Attorney: Ed M. Bowman. Clerk District Court: W. A. Colvin. Representative: M. A. Conkling. Coroner: Dr. Street. Surveyor: Lyle L. Bishop.

Frasier appointed C. E. Ayres, deputy. Ayers got into trouble with Sam McNeal, and in the shooting Ayers killed McNeal. Ayers was acquitted, as he had shot in self defense.

At the regular election in the fall of 1880 the officers elected were: Representative, D. B. Stone; County Clerk, Homer D. Colvin; Treas., John Hitchcock; County Attorney, L. G. Parker; Sheriff, Chas. E. Ayers; Sup. Pub. Inst., D. W. Burt; Probate

Judge, Luther Brown; Register of Deeds, Geo. W. Keys; Clerk of Dist. Court, D. C. Floyd; surveyor, Wm. W. McKay.

The summer of 1880 was a crop failure and John P. St. John went in again as Governor, on the dry ticket, and the men were supposed to be as dry as the ground.

May 1881 the U. S. Land Office was located at Oberlin with Thomas H. Cavanaugh (who died at Tacoma, Washington, the fore part of September, 1909) as register and C. E. Chandler of Wamego, Kansas, as Receiver.

September 11th, 1883, the Land Office at Erwin was consolidated with Oberlin and stayed here until February 5th, 1894, when it was moved to Colby, Thomas County, Kansas.

The fall of 1881 Ayers killed John Henry and wounded —— Gaston. After that we had quiet times.

Comment by the Writer.

Mrs. S. J. Harvie closes with this statement: "In the fall of 1881, Ayers killed John Henry and wounded Gaston. After that we had quiet times."

The facts are, at the time and preceding that time some years Westfield, or Oberlin as it was later called, was the last town on the frontier located on the Sappa. Culbertson was similarly situated on the Republican. Both towns had cattle ranches located west of them on the Sappa, the Republican and on the Beaver in between. It was the custom of the cowboys to go to one town or the other at intervals and among their number were always men who drank the so-called whiskey readily obtainable at "drug stores" in either town. It required but little of this to set the boys on fire and they would proceed to ride their horses up and down the street shooting right and left without thought or caring as to damage of life or property. When sobered up they usually settled without controversy for damage done, but they could not settle for the harassed feelings of the men and women who were becoming more and more terrified as their performances were being repeated. Chas. E. Ayers, the elected and duly qualified sheriff of the county, with full knowledge of the risk he was taking, determined to stop this shooting up the town and warned the boys of his intention. The story was as the writer heard it at the time, that the cowboys thinking to bluff him out, rode into the town, shooting out windows right and left and one of them put a shot near Mr. Ayers. He stepped back in his blacksmith shop and secured a gun, then standing outside waited for their return ride. On they came, shooting as before. He called to them to stop shooting and surrender to the law. One of them fired very near him, hitting just above the door; he then raised his gun and fired. A horse with an empty saddle galloped on. Again he fired and again a man dropped out. The rest rode on and left town. After that as Mrs. Harvie said, "We had quiet times," but there was a reason, their sheriff meant business.

PART II. -- 1875-1940

Chapter X

Pioneers — Short History of My People

WITH chapter ten begins that more exclusive and intimate period in the author's life. He writes of his ancestors and some of the salient features of their lives and characters, early claiming obedience to the first of God's direct commandment, "To multiply and replenish the earth." Historical philosophers have said the obedience in this has been better in hut or cabin than in mansion or palace. As to the second "That we should earn our bread by the sweat of our brow" follows the same rule and principle.

It is not strange that to improve our habitations and homes, throughout centuries following the parallels of latitude, the pioneers wrought zealously in improving the lands and claims they sought. For then were found or established better homes, more comforts, intelligence, freedom and better governments. Who did this? The pioneers. And who were the pioneers largely? They were of those European countries most advanced in agriculture, of a good measure of education and independent in religion, seeking freedom in different stages, stopping mayhap for generations on the way until they landed as these pioneers did, after a most thrilling and interesting journey. They knew their ambition, they conceived their careers, proceeded to carve them out on a basis of good citizenship.

Pioneers.

Our families have always been pioneers. Our mother's parents immigrated from Alsace, Germany in their early youth with their parents. Her father, George Bastian, worked when a youth on the Great Reservoir built in Ohio for headwaters of the canal used for transportation. I know it as the Salina or being near Salina, Ohio. Her mother's family were also natives of Alsace, the name being now variously spelled as Pfenning, Fenning, and Fenny, all of the same parent stock.

When our mother's parents were married, they blazed a home in the woods on government land in western Ohio where our mother was born, in 1844, she being the oldest of a family of ten, all of whom grew to maturity on this farm and in a log house prepared by their parents. When a small boy I visited them, and I can readily recall the home and location, the sheep and the cattle, and some splendid horses with which the farming was done. I also recall in one forty-acre field a large number of stumps, it having been cleared in recent years, and it being in the spring of the year, corn was planted by lines drawn by one horse, holes dug with a hoe, and one of the girls dropped corn in the holes made by grandfather, and the other covered it. Primitive methods, but it worked as the home family furnished all expense, and the income was all theirs. Their family, as stated, consisted of ten children, the first seven being girls and then three boys.

I also recall seeing our grandmother spinning the wool from the sheep they raised into yarn from which was made stockings, quilts, cloth and no doubt many useful articles for home consumption, all in the home factory.

I also recall seeing grandfather and a couple of the girls making rope out of hemp prepared by grandmother and the girls, and it was quite interesting to me, seeing the home-made machine twist the rope after the strands had been stretched between two points in the barn.

Most of my mother's family lived to good old ages, part of them coming to Nebraska, but all have now passed on.

Our father's parents, Solomon Stilgebouer, were natives of Bavaria. He also immigrated to America in his early youth with his parents. He married a Miss Barbara Wendling, who with her parents came from Alsace, Germany, all locating near Loudenville, Ohio, for a time, and then emigrated to Shelbyville, Ill., after their marriage, where our father, Solomon W. Stilgebouer, was born in 1840.

Grandfather Stilgebouer took up government land near Shelbyville, Ill., and still owned it at the time of his death in 1873.

There were seven children in my father's home family, all of whom grew to maturity and had families. None of them except our father made Nebraska their home, mostly remaining around Shelbyville, Ill.

Our parents were as they had been raised—religious, thrifty, hardworking, and neighborly folks, and we are thankful that the same traits of character were instilled in the minds and hearts of their children, both by precept and example.

With this background, we feel that our families of right are and should be classified as pioneer families, both as to their parents and themselves in the light of their subsequent life.

It is of such as these that the great American nation was builded, Germans, Irish, English, Swedes, Danes and all races who came to America, and builded homes. Wages and hours as now set forth in the "Wagner Act" law, and on the American statutes, were not and could not have taken a part in the development and building of America as our parents knew it, and frankly I do feel that it is a misfit in our present lives, for I never did feel we could make more money and goods and pass on services by working so little, and demanding so much.

With this background of our parents, I will pass on to the story of our sixty-five years of residence in Nebraska.

Our Move to Nebraska.

Our father was a railroader and in the course of his avocation was located in Missouri and Illinois. It was while in Tuscola, Illinois that he became acquainted with a Mr. Carrington who had a son then living on the Driftwood, part of Hitchcock county, Nebraska. Father wrote this son, Mr. Carrington, and his replies were so impressive as to the grandeur of southwest Nebraska and its possibilities both then and as to its future, that our family decided to go West as being best for them and their children. Thus it was that in March, 1875 our parents closed out their holdings in Tuscola, Illinois, which were meager, and with about $900 started for the new land of promise, southwest Nebraska. Enroute they visited father's people in Shelbyville, Illinois—mother and family remaining until father could establish himself, they to soon follow. He made the trip to Nebraska by railroad with Lexington, then Plum Creek, on the Platte river as his destination, then to go overland to Hitchcock county, Nebraska. On arrival at Lexington he became acquainted with Joel B. Dolph who was located on the Beaver valley south of Indianola in Red Willow county, Nebraska, who gave such a glowing description of the Beaver Valley and its possibilities, adding that he had hunted buffalo through the valley of the Driftwood in Hitchcock county and there was no comparison between the valleys of the two. Mr. Dolph was going home, being in Lexington for a load of supplies with an ox team. Father decided to go with him and see the Beaver first. Mr. Dolph informed him that he had best purchase a team and other necessaries in Lexington as he could not buy them in southwest Nebraska. Here is a record of some of his purchases: Yoke of oxen $140, ox yoke $5, log chain $3, wagon $105, breaking plow, mold board variety $27, and other numerous articles and supplies.

At that time the Union Pacific railroad, then seven years old, was the only railroad crossing Nebraska, its Eastern terminal being Omaha, Nebraska. All supplies were freighted by wagon to southwest Nebraska from Lexington and North Platte.

The topography of western and southwestern Nebraska is so generally known that I will only describe it by saying the Platte and the Republican rivers, in general, flow east through fertile valleys, with side streams and canyons entering them from northwest and the upland between these rivers rising to an elevation of from 100 to 200 feet.

Mr. Dolph and my father arrived on the Beaver, by way of Arapahoe and Indianola, after five days of travel—camping on the way. I have since driven this distance by auto in three and a half hours.

All new countries have been settled first by poor people and, as a result, the land along the streams was occupied first by reason of the accessibility to timber and ready, inexpensive access to water. This was true on the Beaver Valley when my father arrived. Father was so pleased with the valley and being shown every kindness and courtesy by its citizens, he soon selected 160 acres as a pre-emption in Section 27-1-28 and a timber claim adjoining in Section 22-1-28, driving to North Platte, Nebraska, where the government land office was then located, 85 miles distant, to make his filings.

In the fall of 1873, B. B. Duckworth had pre-empted the southwest quarter 27-1-28 and made his final proof and returned to Eastern Nebraska to continue his milling trade. By an error made in surveying the lines by the county surveyor, the sod house and stable that he built were located on the northwest quarter 27-1-28 and thus provided father with the customary house without the building of one, which in several ways was indeed fortunate, as it saved both time and money and much better sod for houses could be procured in the fall, when this was built, than in the spring. The house had two rooms about 14x16 each—dirt, or no floors, window frames and doors were made of native green cottonwood lumber, which warped and twisted alternately when it rained and dried, and having so-called Ridge logs resting lengthwise on the ends and on a sod partition crosswise in the center of the house. The walls were three feet thick, built in the manner of brick. The Pawnee Indians that were massacred in Hitchcock County near Trenton had camped on the Duckworth farm and had cut a large number of small trees and poles for the purpose of drying their buffalo meat on. These poles were used in quantity as rafters reaching beyond the walls to the ridge logs—on this was placed willows, hay, then sod and dirt. Very fine and comfortable, but a perfect sieve with sufficient rain. The stable was of similar construction, large enough for eight head of stock.

Nebraska.

As my first sight of Nebraska was in Omaha, it has occurred to me that a few words regarding the early History of Nebraska and Omaha would be appropriate at this time and place. The First National Bank of Omaha has material data in a booklet commemorating its Eighty Years of operation and service, 1863-1943 and have graciously given their consent for me to glean from its historical pages, facts that I do feel to be of interest to the reader, informative in character and worthy of preservation. I quote:

"In 1854, the Omaha Indians owned all the land opposite Council Bluffs then a city of some 2000 population, and was zealously guarded by them until by Treaty in 1854, the land was ceded to the United States Government. At that time, Nebraska was a Territory, which included the present states of Nebraska, North and South Dakota, all that part of Montana east of the Rockey Mountains, about three fourths of Wyoming, and parts of Colorado, the entire population of this vast area was 2,732.

At the signing of the treaty in 1854, some new settlers began locating west of the river. It was not long until more white people came and brought their families, and it was then that citizens of Omaha wished to secure a Charter for the City of Omaha, but first it was necessary to put up a deposit of $500.00 in gold for the purpose of making an application to the Government.

The people of Omaha to be, asked Thomas Davis to loan the money to the city of Omaha, so that there might be an Omaha; it was the first loan to the city of Omaha and in fact that started the city of Omaha back in 1854, taking the name from the Omaha Indians."

Omaha seemed to make very little progress in the intervening years between 1854 and 1863. Again I quote.

Omaha.

"In 1863 OMAHA was a village of the old frontier in the truest sense of the word; it was a veritable mud hole with but two wretched streets weaving along the river bank, and lined with flimsy frame and log structures of a people too eagerly bent upon the pursuit of success to squander time or expense on the "niceties of civilization." It was an outfiting place of thousands of emigrants preparing for the search of the gold fields, and so its squalid streets were thronged with every type of man from the earnest home-seeker, to the desperado drawn forth by the dazzling dreams of wealth to be gathered beyond the Rockies. Banking in that day was carried on in the loosest lines and with the utmost recklessness. The bills of the various banks of the states varied so much that one had to consult a register to see what the last quoted value of the particular bill was, before it could be safely taken. In the first years banking was carried on by individuals, or by business firms such as real-estate land agencies and trading posts loaning and granting credit. In fact, there was no banking as we know it today until the Government finally was compelled by the loose, unhealthy situation to enact the National Banking Act in 1863. This act started the banking of today and marked the new phase of industrial and territorial westward expansion which is associated with the building of the great West. Although we are associated with the first loan made to OMAHA, with the banking of Wild Cat days, we are dating our origin to the day when our bank took on its present name, to the time when our present system of banking started, to 1863, four years before Nebraska became a state, eighty years ago, when we took on the name given to us by the United States Government, The First National Bank of Omaha, and as Omaha was the starting point of westward expansion, we are the Oldest National Bank from Omaha west."

"Back in 1863, eighty years ago, the steamboats on Missouri river would bring in supplies, and for land transportation the ox team was the most common.

But in the same year, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued his order fixing the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad and ground was broken on the "North Omaha Bottoms" for the building of the Transcontinental railroad, that in a few years would revolutionize the world transportation. It was not far above the present shops of the Union Pacific that the ceremony starting the Union Pacific was held, among whom in charge of the arrangements was the President and Cashier of the First National Bank of Omaha."

"All of us know the importance of cattle to the land west of the Missouri, but few of us know that the President of the First National Bank of Omaha started and fostered the industry for the West."

"Checks for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Western Union Telegraph were drawn on the First National Bank of Omaha: we are glad to have been of help in these epoch making events, and to have started the grazing of cattle west of the Missouri River, but events such as these, and in fact so many, many famous names and events of both years gone and today can come only to an institution which has weathered the years of History, starting out in 1863."

On the first Monday in October, 1863, the assets of the First National Bank of Omaha, shows $75,045.63 among which was Bullion, unassayed gold dust valued at $3,529.38.

Its growth with other Omaha Banks, have ever been in harmony with the growth and progress of Nebraska.

Omaha, too, has grown from the stage of muddy streets and lack of the "Niceties of Civilization" to the proud position of the Metropolis of Nebraska; a city of many industries chief of which are its Packing Plants, making palatable the cattle, sheep and swine produced on the plains which once constituted the original Nebraska Territory, and furnishing a dependable market for them.

In 1863 another event of vast and far-reaching importance was in President Lincoln signing the bill passed by the Congress thus making it into law, granting Homesteads of 160 acres practically free to all U. S. Citizens and those signing declarations to become such.

Other qualifications being 21 years of age, man or woman, but the women were restricted to being single at the time of filing: All were required to occupy the land filed upon and make certain improvements.

This law started a wave of settlements on the plains states, thus the Biblical injunction was heeded, "To subdue and replenish the earth." To this was added in practice and necessity, "To subdue and abolish the Plains Indians."

While ground was broken for the Union Pacific Railroad in 1863, it was not until May 10, 1869, that it was completed.

The Plains Indians resisted its building with all the force, raids and massacres that they could muster, but their opposition was overcome, and the Union Pacific Pioneered with the Burlington in the opening of an Empire and preparing it for settlement.

The year 1868 the Beecher Island fight with the Plains Indians brought the United States Government to a realization of its duties and obligation towards its citizenry, the homesteaders, in the protection of them, if the plains were to be occupied and produce freight, live stock and cereals, for the road it helped to build. Transportation was and is so vital to the plains, that Nebraska is fortunate to have within its borders the Union Pacific and Burlington systems, rendering such dependable service in the early days and each have steadily improved in road bed and equipment with the result of improved service.

Chapter XI

Our Trip to Nebraska

THE trip from opulent Illinois to southwestern Nebraska, with a sizable family, noting the transitions along the way and finally landing in the unpromising state corner must have been some what discouraging under the details of this and preceding Chapter. However, there was a saving grace in their welcoming.

"What though we were isolated." "Fellow feelings and similar circumstances make people wondrous kind." "Better a neighbor who is near, than a brother far off."

What matter if their cattle trespassed. What of the differences about the line fences. What a present wealth of human nature the pioneers possessed.

* * *

About the last of April, 1875, we received a letter from father to come to our new home. Our mother, Elizabeth Stilgebouer, and family (consisting of William J., age 11; Forster G., age 9; Ella M., age 7; and Solomon H., age 5;) started from Shelbyville, Illinois, on the second of May, 1875, with joy and enthusiasm on the part of the children and I am certain with more or less anxiety and misgiving on the part of our mother, for on July 15, 1875, our brother Edward B. was born without the consolation to our mother of a physician—none being in the country.

Our State Historical Society, of which I have long been a member, in a recent magazine had a picture of the then Omaha depot, a wooden structure of very modest proportions, and, when looking at it, I was reminded very vividly of my first sight of it on our arrival at 4 P.M. On the platform were men dressed in the garb of the day, with whiskers and high-topped boots—some in buckskin clothes; also Indians, both men and women, and I recall a squaw who had a papoose hanging on her back, to which our mother called our attention. Those Indians were real and we kids came near having chills. We reached our destination by rail, Plum Creek, about 10 P. M. and when emerging from the train, the sight of our father gladdened all our hearts. Father had hired a team of bay mares from a neighbor to make the trip, the neighbor, Steve Boyer, coming with him and driving a span of mules to get a load of goods for the Indianola store. The next forenoon was spent in making and loading such necessary purchases as they required and by noon both wagons were loaded and ready to start. Mr. Boyer led with the mule team, my brother Will and I riding with him, and father, mother, Ella, and Solomon came with the bays in the rear. We crossed the Platte River, which was then in a freshet stage, on a long, narrow wooden bridge with now and then side tracks for passing. It was the most thrilling thing to me of any part of the trip to Nebraska and I was surely happy when we reached the south end and solid earth. An overland trip then from Plum Creek to Arapahoe, was on nature's road, marked by sod about a foot square turned upside down, and it stood out plainly on the short buffalo grass, very little improved by the hand of man, except in a few of the worst canyons and hills. We stayed over-night at two ranches enroute to Arapahoe, one known as Dad's Ranch and the other as Vaughn's Ranch, but I am not sure which was the nearer Plum Creek and which was the nearer Arapahoe; no sight of habitation except these two. Arriving at Arapahoe, a very small village at that time, we traveled up the valley to Dry Creek, just west of Bartley, Nebraska, camping there over night, then an early start to Indianola—the then county seat of Red Willow County. Indianola had one general store, a very small frame building used as a court house, a blacksmith shop, and perhaps a few other small shacks. The storekeeper, Mr. Meyers, was a widower with two grown young daughters, living in the rear room of the store. It was through the hospitality of these daughters that we ate our first buffalo meat; I recall it tasted different than beef and thought not so good.

Solomon Boyer and wife, parents of Steve, had requested father to bring the family to their home on arrival so we traveled what was then known as the Boyer road. Starting southwest from Indianola we came to the Republican River, at what was known as Reddick's ford. No bridges were across the Republican and it was often treacherous as to shifting sands and quicksands. The river was just at a good normal stage, so Steve said, and made fun of our fears. The mules being in the lead, we took to the water first. The bank on the north side where we entered was about five feet high, sloping to the water. Our first plunge, for such it was because a channel of deeper water had formed next to the bank, brought water on the dashboard but the mules struggled on and reached the south shore all without mishap. Then the bays and father followed with the same experience we "enjoyed". We drove up the valley about a mile to where the road left the valley up a canyon to reach the divide, and camped for early dinner. I recall that a Mrs. Thomas, whose husband had later been killed by lightning, called on mother, she living near. We reached the Solomon Bover home, a fairly large dugout in the bank about a mile west of Marion and two miles from our home, near sunset, and we surely received a hearty welcome from these good old people. The next day we moved into our own sod house previously described.

It has occurred to me that as many of the first settlers' descendants are still living on the Beaver that it would be of interest to record the names of those who were there in 1875 when we arrived, or only away for a short time and later returned.

I will begin about eight miles west of us and name them to about eight miles east of us—also considered neighbors:

Mr. McKenzie and wife (Elderly)
Dave Royce (Single)
Mose McKinzie (Single
Ike Bowen (Single)
Clarence McKenzie (Single)
Joe Turby (Single)
Mr. Dimmick and wife (Elderly)
Joe Dimmick and wife
Clarence Dimmick (Single)
Sarah Dimmick (Single)
Lemuel Daniels and wife
Eugene Daniels and wife
W. C. Shockly (widower)
Perry Plum (Single)
Solomon Boyer and wife (Elderly)
Steve Boyer (Single)
Andy S. Boyer and wife
Gottleib Weyeneth (Single)
Wes Fisher and wife
John H. Robinson and wife
H. C. Plum and wife
John Houston and wife
B. B. Duckworth and wife
Frank Fanta (Single)
S. W. Stilgebouer and wife

Geo. N. Gilbert (Single)
Mrs. Moore (Widow)
Ed Moore (Single
Clarence Moore (Single)
Wm. Royce (Single)
John Tennis and wife
Wm. Sparling and wife
Jesse Ashton (Single)
Barnett E. Ashton (Single)
Eli Allington (Widower)
Joel B. Dolph (Single)
J. E. Dolph (Single)
Ira Dolph and wife (Elderly)
Elmyra Dolph (Single)
Milo Dickenson (Single)
Friend Dickenson and wife
J. E. Johnson and wife
Richard Henton (Widower)
W. T. Henton (Single)
Louis Drath and wife
Herman Drath (Single)
Mr. Butterfield (Single)
Samuel R. Messner (Single)
John L. Townley and wife
Wm. Townley (Single)
Mr. Hawk and wife
James Springer and wife
Wm. Springer (Single)
Harve Springer and wife
Wm. Halsey (Single)
B. F. Bradbury and wife
Mrs. Bowers
G. A. Galusha and wife
Waterman Whitaker (Widower)

This covers the valley from now Lebanon to a few miles west of the now Cedar Bluffs, Kansas, and we knew them all as neighbors and I think I have a fairly accurate list of names.

Mother surely was a good sport for I recall that she entered into the spirit of the West at once, that is: "To make the best out of the great changes and appear to like them." The home was soon arranged by her and made comfortable.

When we arrived on the Beaver, the efforts of George N. Gilbert of Danbury, Connecticut, who had arrived a few years before us, had secured a Post Office. He called it Danbury, in honor of his old home town in Connecticut and a Star Route was established from Orleans, Nebraska, up the valley to Cedar Bluffs, Kansas, served at that time on horseback and as I recall—twice a week—and as mail reached Orleans by Star Route from the Union Pacific railroad, letters and newspapers were almost ancient history on arrival.

The year 1874 was the year of the destructive grasshopper raid and very few people had any grain in 1875 but, undaunted by the previous year's destruction, the spirit of the West prevailed and all were at work plowing fields, breaking sod and planting crops.

The ox team was busy every day pulling the breaking plow and Will and I were busy planting sod corn. The method of planting was: Will with an ax would chop or sink his ax on the edge of every third furrow and I would drop in two or three kernels of corn and then stomp the slit shut with my heel. This was done about three feet apart in a row and we could keep up in the planting with the slow-going ox team, about an acre a day. Some used a spade and dropped the corn by one person, a few had hand sod planters, but largely planting sod corn the first years was by ax and drop. Later improved methods were used, even to sod planters drawn by team, and man or boy dropper. When corn began to come up, the ground squirrel began to work, and as a result thinned the stands very materially.

The year of 1875 was a year of more than normal rainfall, and the folks of the valley raised a good crop. One hoard of emigrating grasshoppers in late July stopped off in their flight but did only a meager damage before going on again. Most of the settlers planted pumpkin, squash, citrons, pie-melons, and sugar cane, all of which did well, and such appetizing sorghum as we had, and in great quantities. The sorghum was made for the entire community by the Jesse C. Ashton Cane Mill, the toll being one half. These things, together with delicious wild plums and grapes, buffalo and antelope meat, gave us plenty and variety to fill our hungry souls.

I recall father went on a buffalo hunt early in June with a neighbor who had a horse team, and returned in a couple of days with wagon loaded. When successful hunts were made, the usual procedure was to divide with your neighbors. This was done. John H. Robinson, the neighbor with team, and father kept two hind quarters and cut them in strips and suspended them from poles laid across a frame-work of poles set in the ground, and it was my job to build and keep light smoke going under it to keep insects away until it dried, which it did and kept, until used, in splendid condition. I recall talking with an old gentleman, Mr. Finch, living in the early days southeast of Bartley, who told me that he killed a buffalo on the now townsite of Bartley early in July, 1874, and took a quarter home. In late August he passed that way and seeing the rest of the buffalo in a dried state, took his pocket-knife, cut out a chunk and it was preserved and good dried meat.

May I digress for an incident in the life of this good man I think should not go unrecorded, as surely it is one of the trials in winning the west. There were very few women in 1874—he being a widower none were in his neighborhood, except a young couple in which an increase was looked forward to. They had arranged for the assistance of a neighbor, Mrs. John Welborn, about three miles distant, and across the Republican River.

When the time came that her service was required, the husband called on Mr. Finch and he, having no team, started on foot for Mrs. Welborn. She was a young woman then, and it has been the privilege of myself and family to know her and her husband and family intimately and well. When Mr. Finch came to the Republican it was high from recent rains. He waded in, and at times was up to his arm pits. This good lady responded to his call, walking with him, and when they arrived at the river, he told her there was only one safe way to cross, sit on his shoulders, with a leg on each side of his neck, so he could put his arms around them, hold her tight and so far as possible keep her out of the water and to not get pannicky, as he would get her safely across. All this at night with a lantern for guidance. The necessity of the mission spurred her couage and the deed was done. They arrived without mishap and success crowned their efforts in every respect. Is it any wonder that old-timers have the greatest love and respect for each other?

In the spring of 1875, soon after we were "at home to our neighbors," the second death occurred in the territory. The first was a small baby born to the Wm. Sparling family in the fall of 1874 and George N. Gilbert, a bachelor suggested that he would set aside five acres in the northeast corner of the Southeast ¼ of Section 22, township 1, range 28, as a cemetery. This was done, and thus a little child was the first to be laid at rest in the fall of 1874 in what is now Danbury cemetery. The second was George N. Gilbert, himself, he took typhoid fever and passed away after a very short illness. He was buried in Danbury cemetery and, many years later, the community erected a tombstone marking his grave. He came from Danbury, Connecticut, in

1873, and was our first postmaster, calling it Danbury in honor of his old home city in Connecticut.

To record the neighborly spirit of the good folks who had preceded us—Mrs. Solomon Boyer, Mrs. Houston, Mrs. Robinson and J. E. Dolph each set a hen and later sold mother the hen and gave her the chickens. This was greatly prized, as chickens were very scarce. Our mother later passed this helpfulness in kind on to so many newcomers that at times she would have a dozen hens setting for such a purpose at one time. This and many other helpful and neighborly kindnesses cemented those pioneer women together in a love for each other that was beautiful and enduring.

Chater XII

My First Buffalo Hunt

BUFFALO Hunt. Battle with the Bison, with of course, the inevitable victory of the Biped over the Quadruped. That monstrous looking brute, if you face him, was meat, bed, cloak, door and window for the pioneers. It is lamentable that its extermination was so ruthlessly sought, but his presence in many pastures now somewhat softens the criticisms of a generation ago. Buffalo hunts with Buffalo Bill, the grand duke Alexis and many conspicuous American characters, thrilled us youngsters three score and ten years ago. And while these mentioned were not exhibited so as to be recorded in the book, yet, our pioneer hunters, in their own forays, had equal exhibitions somewhere along the Republican, Beaver and Sappa. The stories of the bison nimrods were many and their tales of conquest were as awe-inspiring as the plains and aborigines.

* * *

In the early summer of 1875, father, Wm. Sparling and I with our ox team went buffalo hunting. About 10 A. M. they sighted buffalo and placed the wagon, with team tied to it, in the head of a small canyon and left me on guard, they going on foot into the canyon towards the buffalo. I grew impatient, they being gone so long, and walked up to higher ground to see if I could locate them or the buffalo where we first sighted them. In a short time I heard a rumble like distant thunder, saw a cloud of dust raising in the air, and soon 25 or 30 buffalo emerged from the canyon running within a quarter of a mile of me. In about an hour father and Mr. Sparling returned and asked me if I had sighted the buffalo. I said yes, I saw them running down the road towards the creek. They laughed and said there was no road and I replied that I saw a lot of dust raise as they ran, anyway. Father thought the buffalo must have seen me and ran as they were crawling near them to get in shooting distance. We arrived home in the evening—minus any buffalo meat.

Another time father was hauling hay towards home and called for us to bring his rifle—a yearling buffalo strayed from a herd was following him. When we boys ran with the rifle, the buffalo became frightened and ran around the load of hay on down the road. Father shot at quite a distance and supposed he missed. Joel B. Dolph was coming up to our house on horse-back and seeing the buffalo, took after it. He had no gun, so when he caught up with it, he slid off his horse and on the back of the buffalo, thus captured it. "Bull-dogged" it, if you please. Taking it home, he discovered a fresh gunshot wound on the leg above the ankle. It would not eat or drink and in a few days died, I presume of a broken heart. It was not difficult to tame the buffalo calves if taken very young. Several of our neighbors had them. I remember Friend Dickenson had a two-year-old bull in his herd of cattle in 1875 that he caught as a calf in 1873. It was tame and seemed to like petting, which we did.

The buffalo had been hunted and killed for their hides and robes so extensively for several years before we came to Nebraska in 1875, that they were few in small herds, in the country that had been a veritable Paradise for them; the Republican Valley and its tributaries; from the North, The Deer Creek, Medicine, Willow, Black wood and Whiteman's fork, later known as the Frenchman, and the South, the Prairie Dog, the Beaver, Sappa, Driftwood, Burntwood and Big Timber, with the variety of luscious grasses in the Valleys, the Buffalo grass on the divides, the pure clear water flowing in their streams, made a perfect setting for Buffalo environment. The Republican Valley became famous as an ideal hunting ground. It was on the Willow that the Grand Duke Alexis Hunt was staged, while a guest of the Nation in January, 1872, with great success. Those participating in the hunt were the Grand Duke, Alexis of Russia; General Sheridan and Company of Soldiers; Buffalo Bill and some civilian guests; and a band of Indians headed by Chief Spotted Tail. The Camp, about 10 miles northeast of Hayes Center, is now a State Park.

Three of our neighbors, John Tinnis, a Mr. Taylor and Thomas Plum, spent the summer of 1875 in hunting and killing Buffalo for their Hides. Their hunting ground was between

Wallace, Kansas, and Ogallala and east of a line of the two towns in which they marketed the hides. They killed many buffalo on the Beaver, Driftwood, Burntwood, Big Timber and South Fork of the Republican. The larger part of the Buffalo went South to winter, but small herds always wintered in the territory of the Republican Valley until exterminated.

The first Chapter of this history is written by Thomas Rannahan, chronologically setting forth the causes of the Beecher Island fight, in the hostility of the Plains Indians to the White Settler encroaching upon his domain. The causes were the numerous fights and raids by the Indians prior, to and leading up to the Beecher Island fight. If we go back into history, we observe the remote causes. Treaty after Treaty was made with the Indians by the Government only to be broken by the Government when the white man moved on his reservations, until he, the Indian, realized he was losing his hunting ground and with it, his means of living was being destroyed. The end of the Civil War was the beginning of the Plains Indian War on the Settlers and hunters. This to prevent the extermination of the Buffalo and his range which meant their homes, their living and the only life they know in tribal clans.

Mr. E. S. Sutton of Benkelman, Nebraska, has made a wide and extensive research in reference to "Buffalo Hide Days," and compiled much valuable information from source material, as to the slaughtering of the Buffalo for their hides, the number and the effect this slaughter had on the way of life of the Indians, and their attitude towards the encroaching white hunters and settlers. He has generously given me permission to quote from his manuscript such parts as I desire.

I have selected a few facts that will give the reader a true picture of the buffalo, his probable number, his extermination, and the inevitable result to the American Indian.

"When we want to know something we go to the man who knows about it.

There was no one who did know more about buffalo than did Col. Richard I. Dodge who lived amongst them for thirty-four years, from 1848 to 1882. We quote liberally from his chapter on the buffalo in his book, "Our Wild Indians", published in 1882.

. . 'it is almost impossible for a civilized being to realize the value to the Plains Indian of the buffalo. It furnished him with home, food, clothing, bedding, horse equipment, almost everything. With it he was rich and happy, without it he is poor as poverty itself and constantly on the verge of starvation . . . . the migrations of the buffalo were exceedingly erratic, depending somewhat on climate but principally on the supply of grass. From 1869 to 1873, I was stationed at various points along the Arkansas River. Early in spring, as soon as the dry and apparently desert prairie had begun to change its coat of dingy brown to one of palest green, the horizon would begin to be dotted with buffalo, single or in groups of two or three, forerunners of the coming herd. Thicker and thicker, and in large groups they come, until by the time the grass is well up, the whole landscape appears a mass of buffalo, some individuals feeding, others standing, others lying down, but the herd moving slowly, constantly northward. Of their number, it was impossible to form even a conjecture."

"In May, 1871, I drove in a buggy from old Fort Zara at Fort Larned, on the Arkansas River. The distance of thirty four miles. At least twenty five miles in that distance was through an immense herd. The whole country appeared to be one mass of buffalo, moving slowly northward, and it was only when actually among them that it could be ascertained that the apparently solid mass was an agglomeration of countless small herds of from fifty to two hundred animals. separated from the surrounding herds by greater or less space, but still separated."

"The buffalo is the most stupid of any animal—of which I have knowledge. If it sees or smells no enemy a herd will stand still until every animal is shot down. They will do this some times when the enemy is in plain sight. Once, needing fresh meat for my post I sat down on the ground on the level prairie, in plain view and within less than one hundred yards of the herd shot down two cows and thirteen calves, the others not attempting to leave. We had actually to drive off the survivors by shouts and waving out hats before we could butcher our game."

"The danger from Indians and the great distance from market has heretofore protected the buffalo from wholesale slaughter by whites but by 1872, the buffalo region had been penetrated by no less than three great railroads, and the Indians had been forced from their vicinity. About this time too it was discovered that the tough, thick hide of the buffalo made admirable belting for machinery and the dried skins really commanded sale at three or four dollars each. The news spread like wild fire, and soon the Union Pacific, and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, swarmed with hunters from all parts of the country, all excited with the prospect of having a buffalo hunt that would pay. By wagon, on horseback and afoot, the pot-hunters poured in, and soon the unfortunate buffalo was without a moments peace or rest. Though hundreds of thousands of skins were sent to market, they scarcely indicated the slaughter. For want of knowledge or skill in shooting, and in preserving the hides of those slain, one hide sent to market represented three, four, or even five dead buffaloes."

Beginning the Slaughter.

"The merchants of the small towns along the rail roads were not slow to take advantage of this new opening. They furnished outfits, arms, ammunition, etc., to needy parties, and established great trades, by which many now ride in their carriages; the buffalo melted away like snow before a summer's sun. Congress talked of interfering but only talked. Winter and Summer in season and out of season the slaughter went on. The Fall of 1873 saw an immense accession of hunters, but by this time the local merchants, recognizing its importance, had got the trade pretty well in its own hands. Most of the hunting parties were sent out by them, and were organized for even a greater destruction of the buffalo, and with more care for the proper preservation of the hides and meat. Central depots were established in localities where buffalo were plentiful. Parties were sent out from these which every few days brought back their spoil. Houses were built for smoking and corning the meat, and, though the waste was still incalculable, the results were incredible, but that the figures were taken from official statistics. In 1871-72 there were apparently no limit to the numbers of buffalo."

"In 1872, I was stationed at Fort Dodge on the Arkansas River and was out on many hunting excursions. Except that one or two would be shot as occasion required for beef, no attention whatever was paid to buffalo—unless there were strangers with us. In the fall of that year three Englishmen went out with me for a short hunt and in their excitement bagged more buffalo than would have supplied a brigade. From within a few miles of the post our pleasure was actually marred by their numbers, as they interfered with our pursuit of other game. In the fall of 1873, I went with some of the same gentlemen over the same ground. Where there were myriads of buffalo the year before, there now were myriads of carcases; the air was foul with sickening stench, and from the vast plain; which only a short time before—a twelve months—teemed with animal life, was a dead, solitary, putrid desert; we were obliged to travel southeast to the Cimarron a distance of nearly ninety miles, before we found a respectable herd. Even there we found the inevitable hunters."

"In October, 1874, I was on a short trip to the buffalo region south of Sidney Barracks. A few buffalo were encountered, but there seemed to be more hunters than buffalo. The country south of the South Platte is without water for many miles, and the buffalo must satisfy their thirst at the river. Every approach of the herd to water was met with rifle bullets—care was taken not to permit them to drink for then they would not return. Tortured with thirst the poor brutes approached again and again, always to be met with bullets—In places favorable for such action, a herd, by shooting at it by day and by lighting fires and firing guns at night, has been kept from water for four days, or until it had been entirely destroyed; in many places the valley was offensive from the stench of putrefying carcases. During the three years 1872-73-74, at least five million buffalo were slaughtered for their hides."

The Story Only Half Told.

Colonel Dodge wrote the preceding article in 1882. During the period of his experience and observation about buffalo, his field was limited to Southern Nebraska, Kansas and Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. That was a relatively small part of the buffalo region, yet, he says, that in three years at least five million buffalo were slaughtered for their hides. He does not pretend to discuss the region included in New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, and the Canadian provinces—all buffalo range. Col. Dodge concluded statements:

"This slaughter was all in violation of law, and in contravention of solemn treaties made with the Indians, but it was the duty of not any special person to put a stop to it. The Indian Bureau made a feeble effort to keep white hunters out of the Indian Territory, but soon gave it up, and these parties soon spread all over the country, slaughtering buffalo under the very noses of the Indians.

Years ago, the Plains Indians had ample supply of food, and could support life comfortably. Now everything is gone, and they are reduced to the condition of paupers, without food, shelter, clothing or any of those necessities of life which came from the buffalo; and without friends, except the harpies, who, under the guise of friendship, feed upon them."

Another Buffalo Hunter's Tale.

"We turn to another authority, a real buffalo hide hunter, John R. Cook, who at 12 was taken by his parents to a new home in Kansas, in 1857. In the spring of 1874 Cook left for Santa Fe. After a campaign of prospecting in Colorado, and New Mexico, he drifted to the headwaters of the Canadian River, where he had his first expereince in hunting; he got his first buffalo with a lance. The Mexican party with which he was a self-invited guest succeeded in bagging a total of sixteen animals in their horseback chase.

Later, he engaged to skin buffalo for a camp of hunters at a price of $.30 per hide. He writes in "Border and the Buffalo."

"I walked up onto a little hill, just back of our camp, where I had a good view of the coulee, to the north. I was not more than one hundred yards from camp and after looking a little bit to make sure, I said in a strong voice, "I believe I saw five thousand buffalo" . . . All the men came up with their guns; the old gentleman said there were ten thousand in sight not counting those in gulches and ravines that we could not see. After the hides were brought into camp little holes were cut through them around the edges and pegs about six inches long, sharpened at one end and driven into the ground through the holes—first driving three pegs at the neck end of the hide, then going around to the tail end, and pulling on the hide to the proper degree of driving two pegs on each side of the tail, then going around the sides stretching it to a uniform shape. I told him I would gladly stay indefinitely if I could get some clothes, a gun, and plenty of tobacco."

Later.

"We camped on a tributary of the Peace River where there were five other hunting outfits; that evening there was a general discussion in regard to the main subject in hunters' minds. Colorado had passed a stringent law that made it practically prohibitive against buffalo killing.

The Legislature of Kansas did the same; The Indian Territory was patrolled by United States Marshals, and the venturesome hunters from eastern Colorado, Western Kansas, the Platte and Solomon River came to Texas to follow the chase for buffalo hides."

Authority for Hide Hunting.

"The Texas Legislature, while we were here among the herds, to destroy them, was in session at Austin, with a Bill drawn up for their protection. General Phil Sheridan was then in command of the military department of the Southwest, with head quarters at San Antonio. When he heard of the nature of the Texas Bill for protection of the buffalo, he went to Austin, and appearing before the joint assembly of the House and Senate—he told them that they were making a sentimental mistake. He told them that instead of stopping the hunters, they ought to give a sum of money to strike and present to each one a medal of bronze, with a dead buffalo on one side and a discouraged Indian on the other. "These men had done in the last two years and will do more in the next year, to settle the vexed Indian question, than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years. They are destroying the Indian's commissary; and for the sake of lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies will be covered with cattle, and the festive cowboy, who follows the hunter, will be a second forerunner of an advanced civilization."

"We moved south—arriving at the breaks of the Salt Fork of the Brazos . . . started out and within two hours killed sixty three bison."

"We two skinned thirty three at this killing. It was now a busy time; some days thirty and forty odd hides, then a good day with eighty-five, and one day in February one hundred and seventy-one; then again same month two hundred and three and these two hundred and three were killed on less than ten acres of ground . . . . Another camp near Croton we got nine hundred and six hides . . . . . The Carr & Causey outfit killed three thousand seven hundred buffaloes."

"I had not gone five miles from camp until I saw a great mass of moving creatures, on their annual northern swing. Looking to the east and south as far as the eye could reach, it seemed to me that I was seeing nothing but a solid mass of animals . . . .

"At Mr. Hickey's camp there were "Twelve thousand hides piled there. Two thousand of them killed by the Quinn Brothers. There are several other camps within gun hearing of ours. . Loganstein & Company's hides went to Europe; that English army accouterments of a leather kind were being replaced with buffalo leather, on account of it being more plain and having more elasticity than cowhide; the buffalo leather was not fit for harness, shoes, or belting; but for the leather buffers it could not be excelled.

"I saw in 1874, the year before the great buffalo slaughter began in earnest, a rick of buffalo bones, on the Santa Fe right of way, twenty miles from Granada, Colorado, bones piled twelve feet high and one half mile long. Seven to ten dollars per ton was realized from them alone."

It was claimed that during the year 1876 one hundred fifty thousand hides went down the Missouri River on streamers from Montana, that one hundred seventy thousand went east over the Santa Fe and that two hundred thousand were shipped from Ft. Worth, Texas.

"And I do know from personal observation that for every hide they got to market, one and a half hides were destroyed on the range from various causes; some of the inexperienced hunters failed to poison their buffalo hides in summer and they were rendered unmarketable by hide-bugs; and all hunters agree that a large percentage of all buffalo were badly wounded and walked from the field of slaughter to some isolated ravine or brush thicket and died a lingering death, and if found, the hide was unsalable. Then go to Laguna Sabine, Lagunda Platte, Double Lakes, Mustang Lake, on the Staked Plains, and note that tens of thousands of buffalo that were mired down and perished in a miry, muddy loblolly, to say nothing of many thousands quick-sanded in the Canadian, North and South Red River, the Pease and many tributaries of the Brazos River. The reason so many perished in this way; because for the last few years of their existence there were multiplied numbers of big and little outfits camped at the most available fresh water places ready to bombard them whenever or wherever they came in sight; they were kept on the go; and when they would find a place that was free from fusilade of lead from the long range guns, they would rush in pell mell, crowding, and trampling down both the weak and strong to quench a burning thirst—insane from intolerable, unbearable thirst."

Where the Herds Were.

"We were near the line of the second division of the great herds; . . . . there were three grand divisions; those from British America coming south in summer; as far as the Platte and returning north in the fall. Those in central western Texas going north to the Platte in summer and returning south in the fall; and all from the Staked Plains region down to the Rio Grande were located and they ranged east, west, north and south a certain distance, heading the wind."

(After his sell-out for the reason's kill, Cook joined up for a hunt to the north.)

"During 1876, three miles north of the Red River, here we stayed until the last of November, getting all told sixteen hundred hides."

Commanches Rebel at the Awful Destruction.

"With this wholesale invasion for extermination of their herds by the hundreds of white hunting outfits, the Kiowas and Commanches turned to retaliate; it was their own land and they had been promised protection from this sort of thing. The Government was feebly trying to enforce regulations, but its efforts were fruitless. The hide hunters turned from hunting buffaloes to hunting Indians. Most of the following year was spent in fighting instead of hunting." "But we have followed Cook's narrative far enough to prove that there were hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of hides taken in the limited section of central and western Texas in the short period of two years."

The above facts and figures give you the reason why there were only a few isolated small herds of buffalo when we came to Southwest Nebraska in 1875. Also the reason of the attitude of the Plains Indians towards the settlers, and hunters. And the tragic reason that the Indians were forced to change their way of life or perish. I suggest that you re-read that part of Dr. Brooks' address that covers the passing of the Indian's Way of life.

Chapter XIII

Indian Massacre on Sappa Near Us, 1875

CHAPTER thirteen, known as the Cheyenne Massacre by United States troops, and their aiders, abetters, and profiteers is the dark page in our author's book. (The Sappa brings to mind a personal business venture which budded and blighted, or I might have had a homestead on the Sappa in 1885. The party of the second part welshed his agreement upon an excuse less legal than effective. I was later more successful in purchasing a quarter up the Red Willow adjoining the farm with that of Patriarch (Son of Vulcans) or was it Tubal Cain whose friendship I enjoyed some years ago.* I traded the land to U. S. Severns, a distant relative, for a ninety-acre tract in Iowa.) Thus this massacre might be of the basis of another screen, but it would be horrible.

"Lo, the Indian's eyes are dimmed,
Their arms are left alone,
Wood and plain, that fed and sheltered them
No longer are their own."

* * *

In April of 1875 a band of marauding Indians, with squaws and children, were hunted by a squad of cavalry soldiers. The Indians lay in ambush on the Sappa about 50 miles distant from us, southwest of the now Oberlin, and fired upon the soldiers, killing two. The lieutenant in charge ordered his men to dismount and fire. This they did and, being so enraged at the loss and injury to their comrades, massacred the Indians including women and children. They left the Indians lying as they were killed. Father in hunting buffalo with Joel Dolph saw them. Also, later Drell Annis and J. E. Dolph in hunting ran across them and Drell Annis secured in a plum thicket among the dead Indians, a sheet of buckskin.

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*Nathan Tubbs.

It was the talk at the time that the lieutenant had orders to "Bring them back but bring them back peaceably," and for disobeying orders was court-martialed and sentenced to Leavenworth prison. Keep this incident in mind as it explains much to me as to the action of the soldiers in the Cheyenne Indian raid of 1878.

Since my comment on the Indian massacre on the Sappa I mentioned to Mr. E. S. Sutton, Jr. that I would very much like to verify this, as so little was known or heard of it after the spring we came here. He secured copies of Kansas historical volumes and was rewarded in his efforts by the writings of Wm. D. Street, an early-day settler on the Sappa valley about eight miles south of us, whom I often met as a boy. He also interviewed George H. Williams, an early-day settler of that section of the country and both accounts now follow with selected notes on and pertaining to the massacre.

Cheyenne Indian Massacre on the Middle Fork of the Sappa, Written by Wm. D. Street, of Oberlin, Kansas, for Historical Society — Volume 10.

Early in the year 1875 a band of Northern Cheyenne Indians, numbering about 75 persons all told, whose homes were with the Sioux in the vicinity of the Black Hills of Dakota, left the country of the Southern Cheyennes in Indian territory, to make their way back north.

They had been visiting their friends and allies in the South, and had probably assisted in raids on the Texas border and in skirmishes with the troops during the winter in that southland. They were proceeding in tolerable orderly manner across the state of Kansas, about 40 miles west of the frontier settlements, when, April 18, orders were issued to Austin Henely, second lieutenant Sixth U. S. Cavalry, to intercept and turn back the fleeing band.

On the 19th the scouting party, consisting of forty men of Company H, 6th Cavalry with Homer W. Wheeler, post trader at

Fort Wallace, as scout and guide, an engineer, officer, a surgeon, and two teamsters, a total of forty-six men, left Fort Wallace, Kansas, scouting southeast. On the divide between Twin Butte and Hackberry creeks the Indian trail was discovered, leading northward. Pursuit was immediately commenced. The trail passed near Russel Springs, across the old trail of the Butterfield overland stage route, crossing the Union Pacific railroad at a bridge about three miles west of Monument station, in territory now embraced in Logan County. Thence the trail led northward. On the hard lands of the plateau between the Union Pacific and Sappa Creeks, the Indians apparently divided their trail, each lodge or family taking separate routes, to meet at some given point further north—a favorite ruse of the Indians to throw off pursuers. After following a single trail for some distance it was lost entirely. The troops then marched northward toward the Sappa Creek with the hope of picking up the trail again.

While on the march, April 22, a party of three buffalo hunters, Henry Campbell, Charles Schroeder, and Samuel B. Srach, were met who informed Lt. Henely that the Indians were encamped on the North fork of the Sappa (more properly the Middle Fork of the Sappa). Under the guidance of the hunters the troops pushed forward a few miles and went into camp until after sundown, when the march was continued to within a few miles of the supposed location of the camp. A halt as then made and the scout and hunters went forward to locate the Indians. Their efforts were successful and in the gray dawn of the morning of April 23, 1875, the troops arrived at a point in the valley of the Middle Fork of the Sappa, about three quarters of a mile below the camp, herds of ponies were grazing nearby. A small detachment of the command was detailed to kill the herders and round up the ponies while the main body of the troops charged the village, located on the north side of the creek.

The creek at this place was a wide, sluggish, marshlike pond, several yards wide, probably caused by beaver dams, running almost due east, until almost opposite where the tepees were pitched it turned rather sharply to the south and slightly toward the west, making a large loop, or horseshoe, and running back to the northeast then meandering away on its general eastward course. Within a few rods of the camp to the east and northeast was located a low and rather abrupt bluff of a semi-circular formation, the southwestern edge of a long, regular tongue of land running down from the highlands and terminating with a gradual descent in the bend of the creek and further east and south. The abrupt formation of the bluff near the camp had been caused by the action of floodwaters on the stream for ages past. Gullies had been furrowed out of the western face of this bluff, making admirable places for the protection of the Indian warriors, who soon took advantage of the location.

The troops floundered through the muddy creek; were dismounted and formed their line in the tongue of land just mentioned to the east and northeast of the Indian camp. While the ground on the south side of the stream was rugged and broken, the land to the northward sloped away with a gradual and fairly smooth rise. The troops occupied an exposed position on the smooth ridge. This position was abandoned after two men were killed. The troops were then posted at each end of the semi-circular flat in which the Indian camp was located. This was greatly to the advantage of the troops, as it enabled them to pour a raking crossfire into the camp of the Indians and the low bluff where the warriors had sought protection, without such exposure as the level ridge first occupied presented.

The fight was furious from the start and never ended while an Indian was left alive. Lieutenant Henely, in the report to his superior officers, says: "Nineteen dead warriors were counted, eight squaws and children were unavoidably killed by shots intended for the warriors," making a total of 27 reported killed. White hunters who visited the scene a few days after the fight told the writer that they counted between 35 and 40 dead bodies and later two or three others were found a short distance from the scene of the fray, bringing the total above forty men, women and children lying promiscuously around the burnt remains of their camp, while a number of bodies, variously estimated up to 27, had been thrown into a shallow sandy gully and partially covered by the troops, bringing the number that were really killed up to nearly seventy, which is not far out of the way. Lieutenant Henely reported the destruction of twelve lodges, estimating five Indians to the lodge, the number would be sixty. He also mentions a number of holes that were dug in the ground, which he thinks were for the protection of the Indians who had no lodges. His report as to the number killed does not harmonize with conditions as found a few days later. He says, "From war-bonnets and rich ornaments, I judge two were chiefs and one, whose bonnet was surmounted by two horns, to be a medicineman. The Indians were nearly all armed with rifles and carbines, the Spencer carbines predominating."

According to the report, the fight lasted about three hours. The camp, consisting of twelve lodges, together with the camp equipage, and other plunder was burned or destroyed, very little being retained. One hundred and thirty-four ponies were captured by the troops, buffalo hunters picking up several bands not rounded up by the soldiers.

Lieutenant Henely makes no mention of the escape of any of the Indians, and the inference would be that he thought he had completely wiped the band out of existence. But one Indian and one only, made his escape. A young man without a family in the camp and another older one, made a dash for their lives toward the north, up the long, sloping hill. After getting a mile or two from the camp and entirely out of range of the big buffalo guns the hunters were using in the fight, they halted and gazed back on the field of carnage, when the one with a family said to the other, "You are safe now, go on. I am going back to die with my family." Then wheeled his pony and rode back into the valley and to his death. This information came to the writer several years after the fight, through Ben Clark, an interpreter for the Cheyennes and at one time General Custer's chief of scouts. He said to me, "The Cheyennes continue to sing the praise of the hero who rode back to his death with his family, in that little valley far out on the Kansas frontier." Such a deed of valor deserves more than passing notice even if enacted by a child of the prairie.

The three hunters mentioned before rendered good service as sharpshooters, their long range sporting rifles carrying much farther than the soldier's carbines.

It was a terrible tragedy enacted that April morning on the Kansas plains, where women and babies met their death through the vicissitudes of war. One of the troopers told at Buffalo Park afterward that what was supposed to be a roll of plunder was carelessly tossed into a roaring fire of tepees and tepee poles, when an outcry told them that the roll contained a living human being, a little Indian papoose.

The writer frequently visited the scene of this massacre; first within a short time after this fight. On several of these visits, in the early days, were plainly seen the evidences that Indians had but recently passed that way and paid their respects to their dead friends, leaving marks of various kinds to designate the names, rank, and place where their friends fell in the fight. The annihilation of this band was a severe and bitter blow to the Cheyennes. Whether they deserved such a fate I am not prepared to judge; but three years later, on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 1878, a band of Northern Cheyennes, under the leadership of Chief Dull Knife, in endeavoring to escape from the Cheyenne reservation in the Indian territory to their former home, up among the Black Hills of the Dakotas, and to their friends, the Sioux, swung eastward in the flight and wrecked fearful vengance on the innocent white people who had pushed their settlements out onto the Sappa and Beaver creeks in Decatur and Rawlins counties, where early forty unsuspecting men were killed, women outraged and a vast amount of property destroyed. So ended the last scenes of strife and carnage in the beautiful and famous Sappa Valley. The massacre of the Cheyennes by Lieutenant Henely of the Sixth Cavalry and the massacre of the white settlers by Dull Knife, always appeared to me to be closely connected in the annals of border warfare, now a closed book forever. Peace and quiet now reign in those beautiful valleys so given over but a few years ago, to scenes of bloodshed and death. And the ways of peace are the better ways.

Indian Raid of 1875 on the Sappa.

Related to E. S. Sutton, Jr., by Geo. W. Williams.

"I never understood why the Indian fight on the Sappa is so little known. It seems our historical society has no information. In same quarters it is even denied. But, there is no question of the battle.

It was in April, 1875 that Lt. Henely with a detachment of soldiers from the 6th cavalry was sent in pursuit of a band of

Indians who had been raiding the settlements and overtook the band as they were camped in a bend of the creek.

In some ways it was evident the Indians were not on the warpath as they had their women and children along, but they could not refrain from a certain amount of raiding.

They seemed too sure of themselves and so safe from pursuit they did not keep scouts out, the result was that the troop located the camp in the evening, and early next morning, they charged the Indians. In the engagement two soldiers were killed, which enraged the troopers, they then waded into battle and in a short time had practically decimated the entire band of Indians; some 75 were killed within a very small circumference. But two men escaped, one of them turned back in a vain effort to save his family, while the other, a young man, kept traveling. Later he returned to bury his folks.

The post clerk at Ft. Wallace, a scout by the name of Wheeler, was usually called upon to lead the troopers any time they were in the neighborhood. It was he who located the Indian encampment. Later Wheeler became an officer and served under Lt. Jennings Bryan in the Spanish-American war.

Lt. Henely was court-martialed for disobeying orders. It seems he was instructed to follow the Indians, and to return the band to the reservation, but he was not to engage the Indians in battle. His excuse was that he was following orders when the Indians opened fire, killing two of his men, whereupon the troop took things into their own hands, causing the skirmish to turn into a battle. He was deprived of his command and later while in Arizona with troops, he drowned.

I have been on this battlefield several times. Some of the bodies were never buried; while in a single grave, 27 bodies were dumped. Later the winds and rains washed away the top soil and exposed the skeletons. I have picked up several pieces of the bones, as well as mushroomed bullets and an old pistol."

Notes on Cheyenne Massacre — Sappa From Kansas History.

"Lt. Henely's report varied in many particulars from the account given by Mr, Street and Hill P. Wilson, then sutler at

Fort Hays, in a letter to the Society, says that at that time it was understood that the least said about the affair the better for all concerned.

Austin Henely was a native of Ireland, served in the army as a private and sergeant, company D, and q.m.'s sergeant in the 11th Inf. from Sept. 14, 1864, to Sept. 14, 1867. He was a cadet at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, July 1, 1868 and graduated 34th in his class in 1872. He was commissioned second lieutenant Sixth Cavalry June 14, 1872, first lieutenant Nov. 15th, 1876 and was drowned July 11, 1878, in Arizona, while on duty. Historical Register, U. S. Army.

Homer Webster Wheeler, a native of Vermont, enlisted in the Fifth U. S. Cavalry as second lieutenant Oct. 15, 1875; was promoted first lieutenant Oct. 13, 1884, captain Apr. 7, 1893, major of the Ninth Cav. Oct. 29, 1902; and transferred to the 11th Cav. Dec. 27, 1902. It was currently stated that for his part in the fight, Mr. Wheeler was given a commission as second lieutenant. He is now a major with the eleventh cavalry, ranking 93 in line of promotion.

The camp and battle ground were located on the southwest quarter of northwest quarter and northwest quarter of southwest quarter, section 14, township 5, south, range 33 west, in Clinton township, Rawlins county, about 30 rods east of the west line of the section. The camp with position of the Indians and soldiers covered probably forty acres of land, the principal part of which is embraced in the forty acres described as the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the section."

Mr. Hill relates:

"Mrs. John Prower, of Las Animas, Colo., until recently the wealthy widow of John Prower, a pioneer cattleman of the Upper Arkansas, is a full-blooded Cheyenne woman. When Lt. Henely arrived at Fort Lyon, before leaving for Arizona, he had among his effects some of the paraphenalia of the medicineman of the Cheyenne tribe who had been killed in this fight. Medicinemen are held in almost sacred consideration by all Indians. When Mrs. Prower saw these relics she 'took on' and went thru the mourning ceremonies of the tribe She kept up the crooning and wailing for three days and nights. Her mourning ended, she refreshed herself and made a prediction that "the man who is responsible for the death of the medicineman will die within a year." By a strange fatality her prediction was in part verified. Henely was drowned in Arizona, July 11, 1878. Although not strictly within the limits of her prophecy, it would be hard to convince this untutored squaw that the Great Spirit had not intervened ultimately to avenge the death of the medicineman."

"Report circulated that ten or twelve hunters were engaged in the fight. Lt. Henely makes no mention of the fact in his official report. The writer has never been able to secure positive confirmation of the statement, but rather gives credence to the presence of the hunters. Several parties of hunters came into possession of herds of ponies, which they hurriedly drove eastward to the settlements to prevent other bands of Indians from recapturing them. It was said that these ponies, were given the hunters as their part of the loot in compensation for their participation in the fight. On the other hand, they may have found them straying and drove them off as unclaimed property — the spoils of war. The writer is inclined to the former proposition that the hunters participated in the fight.

Col. Homer W. Wheeler, the guide of the company of Lt. Henely and who won his commission in this expedition, after his retirement from the army wrote a book, calling it "Buffalo Days," which was copyrighted in 1923 and 1925 and published by A. L. Burt and Co. Publishers. Beginning on page 99, chapter 16, he gives a good description of this massacre and mentions the fact that they came across some hunters he knew and they told him the Indians were about 16 miles distant on the north fork of the Sappa. He prevailed on the hunters to turn back with them and show them where they robbed their camp. This they did and went with the soldiers and participated in the fight. Three hunters were named in Lt. Henely's official report, namely Henry Campbell, Charles Schroeder and Samuel F. Srach who, with Homer H. Wheeler, rendered valuable services in locating the Indians and in the fight requested that their services be substantially acknowledged.

A lengthy report of this affair was made by Lt. Henely, accompanied by a table showing the itinerary, prepared by Lt. Hewitt, both dated April 26, 1875 and published in the Report of the Secretary of War, 1875, Vol. 1, p. 88. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs does not mention this slaughter, nor does Manypenny in "Our Indian Wars," 1880, though the latter does recount the reasons provoking the Dull Knife raid and the fate of this band, page 335-41."

Chapter XIV

School Days — Its Primitive Beginnings

TO THOSE who read Mr. Stilgebauer's book, – read it all. But if you are a chapter reader, do not miss chapter fourteen. Especially if you have lived anywhere in pioneer life. There you find the home wholesome, happy, economic, thrifty by all its members. The public school with its memories, the country church, Sabbath school, and neighbors. There is where America built up loyalty and founded independence and constitution supporters. Yea, more, there were fighters when an emergency appeared, Christians in their lives, and brethren among themselves.

* * *

School District No. 4, the fourth in Red Willow county, had been organized in 1874 and one three months' term of school had been taught by Miss Buck, whose father was among the first on the Willow Creek, but no school house had been built. In the summer of 1875 the few families who had children in District 4 – which included us – decided to have a three months' term and Steve Boyer offered his dugout for a schoolroom. As it was my first attendance in a school in Nebraska, and that you may make a comparison of the then and now – 65 years later, I will describe the school house, furniture and books. The dugout was located on the N.W.¼ of Section 33-1-28 about one quarter mile west of the village which is now Marion. It faced the east and as it appears to me now in my memory, was mostly underground, and about 10 by 14 feet in size. The east and part of the side walls were built up with sod to the required height and a small trench or so-called gangway led to the cottonwood board door. It was lighted by two half windows on the east. None on the north, south, or west, and the usual dirt roof. The seats were made of cottonwood slabs with stakes – two at each end through two-inch holes — elevating the slabs to the required height. As the slabs dried, the stakes protruded and one had to be careful in sitting down or "hitching" over. These seats were placed around the dugout with the walls for backs, and open spaces at door, and at back for teacher's desk and chair. No desks or tables but our laps to work on. As to books, there were as many varieties as there were families. We had McGuffeys. About 15 to 18 children were in attendance, and talk about eye-strain, we surely had it. Mrs. G. A. Galusha was our teacher and taught us the multiplication table by singing it. Her manner of teaching helped in two ways. We learned the table and helped in chorus singing. We enjoyed each other, studied, liked our teacher and made progress.

In the early fall of 1875 I was helping Andy Boyer haul pumpkins of the large yellow variety to preserve them in a dugout for winter feeding to their milk cows. As I recall, in a bend of the creek they had broken out about 10 acres of sod, planted it in corn and pumpkins. In late afternoon on returning for a load, the field had the appearance of black and yellow pumpkins. Mr. Boyer said the black ones were wild turkeys, the first I had seen, feeding on his corn. I said there must be a thousand or more, and he replied that there might be a few hundred, and ran home to get his gun. They became frightened and flew away before his return. If you have never seen and heard wild turkeys flying, you can have no idea of the rapidity of their flight or the noise those large birds made, fanning the air. That winter we often had those large luscious birds served on our table. At night was the best time to hunt and get them. They roosted in trees and a quiet, careful hunter could get right under them, and when shot at, they only flew a short distance and lit in trees again. One night my brother Sol and I went with father and were fortunate in locating a large flock in trees about one half mile from home. Father killed nine, could easily have gotten more, but as we had all we could carry, we went home. As usual, our neighbors shared his good fortune. With the coming of more settlers, more hunting, and in a few years all were killed off or left the country. They were of the large bronze variety, some weighing as much as 35 pounds, mostly ten to twenty pounds. These gave variety when mixed in with antelope and buffalo meat, as poultry was yet in its infancy, and pork a luxury few folks had. I recall that Mr. Houston butchered a hog that winter and when division with his neighbors was over, a not very generous portion was left to his family.

In the fall of 1875 they built a sod school house near the S.E. corner of the S.W. quarter of section 28-1-28 on the Wes. Fisher homestead. As it appears in my memory, it was about 14 feet wide and 28 feet long, two full windows on each side, stood north and south with door in the south facing the road and a fireplace of sod in the center of the west side. The fireplace had a stone lining for bottom, sides, back and top on which the wall was built, and chimney of sod construction, brick fashion, on outside of building, built with and a part of building. Our slab seats were moved in, and still our laps for desks. Added to our equipment was a blackboard of wood planed down and painted black. That fall, with some new-comers, we had a large school, perhaps twenty-five or thirty, and the added light was a happy change. Still no floor, dirt roof, supported with the usual ridge log and rafters. Mrs. Galusha was again our teacher.

Our father and Mr. H. C. Plum hauled loads of dead wood for Will and I and Thomas Plum to chop in suitable lengths for the fireplace while we were resting at recess and noon. This was our substitute for football, not so strenuous but more useful.

We liked our teacher and gained much in the three months' term in the fall.

Sunday School.

Now that we had a school house of comfortable proportions our father led and with others organized a Sunday School of which he was the superintendent. The families usually attended in a body, and much interest was manifested. Mrs. Sparling was teacher of us boys from eight to twenty and another neighbor lady taught the girls, none however over fifteen or sixteen years of age. Folks came by team six to eight miles up and down the valley to attend. To stimulate an interest, a Bible was offered to the one in each of the boys' and girls' classes who in a given period would memorize and recite in class the larger number of Bible verses. Maggie Plum won the prize in her class and her sister Betty still has the Bible. I was the fortunate one in our class, gave the Bible to my mother, and later when I became a man, she returned it to me and I still have and prize it. In the reading and the study of the Bible at that time, I became interested in and memorized the Sermon on the Mount. I liked it then and still love it as part of our Saviour's choicest teachings. Desks – homemade – were procured for our schoolhouse and an occasional traveling minister would preach. Nearly always they were guests of my parents.

We always respected our parents' religious viewpoint. We early observed that they lived the life of Christian parents and taught us by word and action that they believed what they taught. Two incidents I will mention that prove this fact. Father thought it wrong to hunt or fish on Sunday and this was simply not done by him or his children, with some chagrin on our part as the beautiful, flowing Beaver creek was only about 200 yards distant, full of fish, and we liked the sport. We could play ball when neighbor boys called – croquet, run foot races and have a good time. One Sunday a preacher, traveling through, and a family from quite a distance came home after church to dinner with us. After dinner I said to a boy about my own age, "let's play ball." He replied, "Does your father let you play ball on Sunday?" I replied, "Yes, doesn't yours?" He said, "Oh, yes, when we are alone, but when some of the old Christians are around, I would as leave be in h–l." It astonished me as I thought his father a very fine man and told him so, and also told him we could do anything when the minister or Christian folks were with us, on Sunday, that we were allowed to do when alone.

Again, one Sunday afternoon stands out vividly in my memory, and as time went on greatly strengthened our love and respect for our father's religious principles. We were out of meat and a herd of antelope, perhaps twenty-five or thirty, came into sight on a flat near a canyon about a half mile away. I saw them, ran to the house all excited, told father to get the gun and he could go up the canyon and surely get one. He replied very kindly and seemingly with no regret, "This is Sunday, Forster, so we will not shoot any today." I said, "Oh, papa, they may be gone and we need meat." Father said, "I will look for them tomorrow." Father in all his life with us had his standard of what he believed was right and would not deviate from it. Later, when I could reason more intelligently I was glad, and am happy now, that he took the stand he did that day. The next day he went out in the forenoon and about 3 p.m. came home with two antelopes strung across his horse.

The antelope was then and, I presume, is yet a very curious animal. Father in hunting would get in a good place such as a Buffalo Waller, or depression in the earth, or head of a pocket in a canyon and stick his steel ramrod in the earth with a piece of red flannel tied on the top. Antelope would see that, even a mile away, and come closer, throw up their heads, trot around and continually come closer until one was dropped by the skillful aim of his rifle. At times they would repeat, and lose another of their herd. That was the case that Monday.

Death again took from our community. Hiram C. Plum immigrated from Wisconsin to southwest Nebraska in the spring of 1873. His family, at the time of our arrival in 1875, consisted of his wife, Ellen, their children, Thomas–age 14, Margaret–8, Mary–6, and Lewis–1. Our families soon became greatly attached to each other, the children meeting often in each other's homes. That attachment remains to this day among those of us still living and later born to our respective families.

Bear in mind we were on the frontier – no doctors, no undertakers, and no ministers of the Gospel, but in sickness and death this lack of skill and helpfulness was substituted for by the kindly ministrations of the neighbors, both men and women, who were ever ready and did respond with such love and helpfulness, that as I now look back on those times I can only feel that it was beautiful and Christ-like.

Lewis Plum, late in January, 1876, became very sick with an infected throat. Mother soon heard of it and sent me to their home to see how he was and if she could render any assistance. This was in the morning. His father was holding him on his lap and I noticed his labored breathing. He appeared to me to be a very sick child. None but the family were there and when I returned, mother saw to it that help was immediate. The child died that day, January 29, 1876. Father made the coffin and in the absence of a minister led in song and prayer. Some days later Margaret complained of the same trouble and died February 7, 1876. Father again made the coffin and as lumber was very scarce, he took a shelf from a cupboard, needed to finish it. In order to help the Plum family to feel that though on the frontier, their daughter could be laid away somewhat in line with back home and to help in lessening their sorrow, mother cut up a new black Alpaca dress and covered the coffin. Many years after this event when Thomas and I were standing by the bier of my mother, he reminded me of her act and what great comfort it was to his mother. When we laid Margaret at rest in the Danbury cemetery, she was its fourth; again our father led in song and prayer at the grave. This he did many times in subsequent years that the bereaved ones might have the comfort of a Christian burial for their loved ones.

Margaret's death made a great impression upon me, as she was a dear, sweet girl and with her sisters and brother we had often been associated in school and in our homes, so we all felt towards each other as one family.

A few days after Margaret was laid at rest, Jesse Ashton and Ed Moore were returning from a hunt and came by the cemetery. They noticed that the grave of Margaret had been disturbed by some wild animals and, on further inspection, found a torn piece of the black dress that had been the covering of the coffin. They came to our home, near by, and told father about it. After discussing the matter, they decided to go to the cemetery and open the grave and thus know if any damage was done to the body. This they did and found no damage except the tearing off of part of the cloth of the coffin. They closed the grave and decided the disturbance was done by an animal called a swift. They were quite numerous at that time but in a few years disappeared. To describe them, they were about the size of a fox, having a long, pointed nose and head similar to one. A grayish color predominated on the back and sides, yellow on the belly with a long, bushy or furry gray tail having a yellow tuft on the end. The fur was much prized for caps and collars. Our men put out poison and the next morning several dead swifts were lying near by. This was followed by more poison, killing more swifts, and thus seemingly got them all or scared the rest, if any, away.

The Plum family never knew of this incident, to my knowledge, nor were any more graves disturbed in the Danbury cemetery. As the years passed neighbors and friends were laid at rest in the Danbury cemetery and under similar circumstances, but none ever made such a lasting impression on me — then a boy of ten — as the burial of Margaret and the sequence which followed.

Chapter XV

Early Day Planting and Farming

THIS is the plower's, planter's, cultivator's, harvester's chapter. What the detail of the primitive progress and success covering the years means to the urban reader I cannot divine, but to the writer it is a revival of hundreds of memories, because similar conditions and disadvantages in the beginning were, in a large family with limited means and humble conveniences, uncomplainingly used. They were bettered and ultimately came comforts, culture, refinement and a broad outlook. There was found the similar large bed and the evening outdrawing of the concealed trundle to be slept in crowded comfort more soundly than "couch of eider down." Did I enjoy this chapter? It seems to have been the adjoining homestead with that of James and Bessie Sloan.

* * *

I have described the different methods of the early-day planting of sod corn, and I also wish to record the fact that watermelons, muskmelons, cantaloupes and all vine crops were planted in a similar manner and grew luxuriantly. In order to press the sod down flat and retain moisture better, father made a land roller about eight feet long and two feet in diameter, by hewing and rounding a tree of sufficient size to bring his desired result. This had roller pins in the ends and a framework, again hewed from native timber, with a tongue similiar to a wagon tongue to guide it. Our oxen pulled this over the sod, and it left a nice flat surface, and corn and vines planted on land so flattened produced much better than lying loosely as plowed and thus more easily dried out by sun and wind. We surely did raise the largest and best melons in those early years from the richness of the accumulated humus in the sod, such that as to size and sweetness their like are impossible to duplicate since. After the planting of the corn and vine crops, the sod was thus pressed firmly and the result, more rapid growth and larger production. This roller was in use a number of years, not only by us but, after its advantages were apparent, by many of our neighbors as well. As the years passed on and the sod became "rotted" and pulverized into so-called "old ground" it was still used in firming the soil, and demonstrated its worth in the greater retention of moisture and more rapid growth of its products. Unlike the riding machinery of today, in those days the farmer walked in nearly all the jobs of the farm. The soil was plowed with a walking "stirring plow," the farmer following the oxen, horses, or mules in the furrow. When plowed, he followed the same teams on the soft ground in pulverizing the soil and filling the air pockets with a harrow. Then the land was marked both ways with a sled marker, on which he rode to make the marks more clearly, then on foot again with a hand planter, planting the corn in the crossing section of the marks. This marking was so that the corn could be cultivated both ways. Then the roller to firm the soil. As the corn came up and was still small, the ground was harrowed lengthwise and crosswise to destroy the weeds starting while yet small. We and many of our neighbors used one-horse cultivators, mostly two shovels, ours had three, going a round trip on each row plowed. Later we got what were called "muly cultivators" pulled by a team, being two plows of two shovels each, fastened together with an "arch," and when you turned your team at the end of the row, it was an art to prevent your cultivator from upsetting or collapsing. This method of farming, nearly all walking, was "pleasant pastime" if your feet and legs did not get too tired. Mine did. Later two horse planters were used and the ground marked only one way, then crossed.

As the years passed on, the walking lister was invented, and the disc. In those days the disc did not have the front ground wheels to relieve the team of the jolts and friction caused by the disc at work, but the disc was carried and guided by the tongue, thus causing sore necks and shoulders and in some instances "sweeney." It was a hard and mean job on horses. Many farmers did not disc their fields for this reason, thus losing precious moisture stored in the soil. In a few years this was corrected with the placing of the front wheels to take care of the jars and twists of the disc. After discing, the walking lister. It had the same sort of mould boards as today, a beam like a plow, with a wheel between you and the lister mould boards to do the dropping of the corn, with two little discs or side cultivators to cover the corn. This make-up necessitated short steps and, at that, one was constantly stubbing his toes against the corn discs. Later riding one-row listers were brought into use, and were a marked improvement. The first method of cultivation on the lister ditches was usually harrowing to kill the weeds, then dragging a V-shaped box in the row fastened to your muly cultivator, and walking, straddling the box. Then later a one-row sled on which you rode, with knives or shears on each side to cut the weeds and draw some dirt to the corn. Finally two-row disc cultivators similar to those of today were invented and we surely appreciated them. In planting the small grain in the early days, it was several years before a one-horse or two horse drill was in the community. The method was: ground first plowed, then harrowed, then sown by hand broadcast and again harrowed to cover the grain. Another method, on spring grain sown broadcast in corn stalks, was to then cultivate with one horse or two and muly cultivator, then harrow to smooth it and more uniformly cover the grain. I worked and had a part in all of the methods of farming as above described, and in addition when the job of corn cultivation was over, again went over the fields with a so-called "nigger-hoe," a heavy, stout one, to destroy the sunflowers and cockleburrs missed.

For a good many of the early years as and for winter feed we mowed prairie hay, blue stem and gramma grass that grew luxuriantly on the rich Beaver valley, and in the canyou bottoms adjacent thereto. Stacking was all hand labor, pitch on the wagon and again pitch off, on to the stack. We usually shocked the hay soon after raking, before stacking, so as to cure the hay in the shock, thus retaining more of the natural color and we thought it made it more palatable, and thus of more feeding value. We also supplemented the hay with corn fodder, which for many years was cut with a corn-knife in the good old-fashioned way and when an armload was secured it was carried to a cross tie of two rows of corn and shocked in the center of an area of ten to twelve hills. It was walking, stooping, arm swinging with the corn-knife, hard work and a good day's work — not the "Wagner Act" kind of a day, but a real day – to cut and shock an acre a day. The shocks were tied above the middle, with a twisted rope made of cornstalks to prevent blowing over. This, when cut while still green, made a very much desired and palatable food for livestock. Before feeding, the corn was usually snapped, or husked and such as was desired fed to the stock in quantities.

I recall a twelve acre tract of old ground on the present location of the town of Danbury that we farmed one season, and cut and shocked the fodder. This was generally hauled home as we used it, being about one mile from our home. One early morning when going after a load with a sled and yoke of oxen, snow perhaps six to eight inches deep, I had about half of a load on the sled when from the adjacent canyon south emerged several wolves. One very large one I took to be of the large gray-wolf variety, the others I decided were coyotes from their yipping and snarling noises. It was just coming daylight and they kept on coming towards us, spreading out fan-like with the big gray in the lead. The oxen became frightened and started to run. I grabbed a standard of the sled and crawled up on the load. The oxen ran in earnest, heading for the ford of the creek and home. I am sure the wolves were hungry and desperate, for they came very close to us on rear and sides, and chased us to the creek before giving up. After that, I did not go after fodder quite so early and was never again disturbed by wolves. In the early days there were many of the large gray-wolf variety, but these were never as numerous as the coyote wolf and, by trapping, in the course of a few years became extinct. Not so the coyote, they are still with us in plenty today, 1940, and wolf hunts are organized and held nearly every fall and winter, by circular round-up.

Alfalfa was introduced and first sown in our community by Jesse and Barnett Ashton in 1885 and proved so desirable for stock feed that father secured seed and sowed 18 acres in the spring of 1887 and was fortunate in getting a good stand, increasing his acreage the next year. It has proven the most valuable crop grown on the Beaver valley over the years, both in its forage and seed. The early handling of the alfalfa hay was all in the hard way. Shocking and pitching on the wagon, and then on the stack. The later "sweeps" and "stackers" were indeed a boon to sore arms and lame backs.

Harvest Time.

In the early days, the few settlers who sowed wheat or rye had very small acreages. The summer of 1875 the only small grain in our vicinity was harvested with a so-called dropper, a sort of lath-like table apparently fastened on a mower and when a sufficient quantity of grain was accumulated, the operator would release a foot pedal, the dropper would fall and the stubble would pull the bundle off. Several men divided the distance around the field, and in turn as the machine would pass, would take up their so-called stations and bind the bundles in this manner: a handful of grain was picked up, holding it by the heads in one hand and with the other hand taking about half the straw and by a simple and age-old twist making a band in the form of a half-hitch about the heads; pick up the bundle and bind it with the head twist next to the bundle and another twist of the stub ends of the grain, tucked next to the grain. It was easier to bind loose than to draw tight, and when loose bound, many bundles became untied and had to be rebound by the shockers. I helped shock the grain, when too young and small to take my station. The method of threshing that year was that one neighbor used a flail — a piece of wood with a hole through the side near the end, and a piece of wood for a handle with a similar hole through it, then the small short piece tied to the handle with a rope and at a distnce of six to eight inches from the handle. Then the bundles were layed on cleaned off ground and the grain pounded out, grain swept up and cleaned with the wind. Primitive methods, yet, but it threshed the grain and secured it for food. There were only three families who had small acreages, Houstons, Boyers and Fisher.

In 1878 Jesse Ashton bought a Champion reaper, a machine that as I recall had four reels of teeth and a platform on which the grain accumulated until of sufficient quantity to make a bundle and then the operator released a trip and one of the teeth reels dropped down and swept the bundle off the platform to the stubble cut side. The men in their stations did the binding by hand as formerly stated. That year I made a hand in the station-binding work, a boy, thirteen. It was hot, hard exacting work. Mr. Ashton cut the grain up and down the creek for several miles, and some of it became so ripe and dry the bands would break, so several nights we worked instead of days to finish the work. I followed the machine in our neighborhood and thus paid for most of our help on our twenty acres.

A threshing machine was brought in by a new settler. Father threshed early and was fortunate as the rest lost their stacks by the Indian fire. Father loaned seed wheat to many of his neighbors until they threshed and as none were threshed, in most instances he forgave the debt. A few years later fall wheat was more generally sown and so father bought a Buckeye Reaper, a machine that also required the station hand-binding. My brother Will operated the machine and I followed it over the neighborhood, taking my station and paying for work returned to us.

About 1884, I think it was, father and B. B. Duckworth bought a self-binder, such as we have today. We were really getting to the front then, five men dispensed with; the machine age in displacing men really arrived. Will and Lotan, a son of Mr. Duckworth, operated it and by reason of the two operators, cut early and late, cutting the grain of the neighborhood of Duckworth and us. The threshing was still in the horse-power age and, as harvest before the self-binder, made a lot of work for the farm women.

I have described the methods of early day farming at some length, in order that the reader may contrast that period of walking in all the work and the hard method of operating a farm, with the tractor, combine and other improved machinery of today. We put in long days and lots of hard work, but the results of our operations were our own. No mortgage on our crops for tractor or gas, no expensive repairs to pay for. We raised our power on the farm and arranged the time to pay for our help in kind. Not so much leisure, but the results more satisfying in dollars.

I have to some extent described the primitive manner of early day farming, its strenuous work in operation and the long hours of work required. It was tiresome in the extreme, and no mistake about it; but no account of the handicaps in the labor of the men of that day would be complete without recording some of the trials and difficulties of that noble band of wives, mothers and daughters, who as good sports entered into the "Spirit of the West," which interpreted was to "Make the best of one's surroundings and conditions and seem to like it." This they did, seemingly cheerful and well. Bear in mind the primitive homes in which they were living — in most of the homes no floors, ceilings being of logs, unsightly rafters and willows exposed to view, sod on them, then dirt, and then, when it rained! Many times a year the houses or dugouts would leak, soil all the bedding and clothing and then came wash days, after the rain and dripping of dirty water ceased and the sun shone again. The washing was done on a wash-board and water carried from the well — no machines in those days — and the ironing was with the heavy, old-fashioned variety, heated on the stove, adding additional heat to an already overheated home. It was hard work and long hours. All washings were rub and tub, the strenuous way.

At times, centipedes would get into the house, perhaps one on or in the bed. Then a thorough hunt for the pests. Often they got into the hay and willows of the roof. I recall mother nailing a bed sheet on the ceiling over the table, to avoid any dirt or insects dropping on the table. Again, the country was thoroughly infested with fleas in those days and in spite of all you could do, (no insecticides in those days) they would become partners with you, on the floor, in your clothes and beds. They were especially distressing to mother who constantly waged war against them. Snakes and skunks were also visitors. Other conditions hindered the homemaker in her desire for the beauty of the home, and the comfort of her family.

Bread-baking days, all the hard way, and preparing and serving the large quantities of food three times a day to a hard-working family, handicapped by lack of variety, tried the souls of these splendid pioneer women.

Nor were their homes to keep their only chores. Large gardens were planted and good results brought forth to table and cellar through their skill and labor. Poultry added to their work and responsibilities, no incubators in those days. The good old hen did the job of hatching as well as producing the egg, and with many hens setting at different times, and their hatches to care for, it added much to the labor of the pioneer women. Their facilities for chicken-raising were very primitive and meager, and as a result, losses crept in through disease and varmints. The skunk was the principal offender caught, and then the offensive odor was there to endure until the wind and nature destroyed it — no quick lime to use in those days.

The making of butter required a great deal of time and care. We soon found out that a cave dug and plastered on the dirt, peeled off, and with insects became unsanitary for milk and butter. Will and I dug a cave in a bank north of our house under father's direction and dug it large enough so we could build a two-foot sod wall inside of it, so as to plaster the walls with native lime and thus have a clean, nice white wall. The south part was all dug-out, or under ground, and the sloping sides and north end and partly sod walls with a gangway entrance. When this was completed, it was cool in summer and made a good clean place for milk and butter. Thus again added work to the pioneer women. No cream separators those days, so milk was strained in pans or crocks or both and let set until the cream rose to the surface—24 to 36 hours—then skimmed and cream placed in a large jar to await churning in a hand dasher churn. As we milked seven to ten cows, churning was usually done three times a week. The straining of the milk, skimming and churning of butter was usually done by mother, and sister Ella. Then washing of pans and crocks. A lot of work and a lot of choicest variety butter which sold from eight to ten cents per pound at Indianola or Wilsonville stores 18 to 20 miles distant—a good day's drive round trip with the team.

Most of the early pioneer women made their own clothes, also clothes for their children. Even when we boys were nearly grown, mother made our shirts and underwear. Those pioneer women needed no instructors at so much per, to teach them how to do the useful things in family life; their mothers taught them the honor and dignity of useful home-making and reared them as helpful accomplished companions to men in the making of homes. In such homes as they made, though meager in outlines and furnishings, were reared honest, happy, contented and industrious Americans and, on such as these, its growth and progress must depend.

Chapter XVI

Indian Scares

INDIAN scares. The title perhaps should be "Battles with pestilence and courageous meeting by the pioneers of those who must meet or fail in the great quest of the plains for substance and holding others so that the community would not be broken.

It will be remembered that the poet, king of the chosen race, who before the passing of his middle age, was through prophet Nathan, rebuked for his transgressions, was given choice of punishment famine, war or pestilence. He chose the last. Farmers can often through neighbors feel famine as a light punishment, the excitement of battle carries many safely through. Flies, grasshoppers, chinch bugs can be by the farmers met, so these pioneers sojourned to Fillmore county. There by sweat of brow aided their less afflicted neighbors and ate of white bread and improved their raiment, warmed the dug-out, and made comfortable the house of sod and came back because it was their home. That made heroes out of men and matrons. It developed real men and women from well bred youths. That was the periodical premier crop of the west. That is why Nebraska has stayed out of debt. That it is why Nebraska rated high in literacy and education. That is why per capita Nebraska leads in producing wars greatest necessities. That is why Nebraska stood the tri-state tests. It was not because there had been vice or offence, but to test their strength, courage and virtues, they were called upon for all three, but not given a choice of punishment of the expiation of sin.

* * *

The Beaver creek flows from a southwesterly direction, heading in northwestern Kansas, and enters Nebraska about four miles west of our home; hence many Kansas folks were neighbors as neighbors went those days. The valley was settling farther west each year, and this was disturbing to a few cattle ranches located above us. I recall distinctly two of them. One was located near where Herndon now stands and was known as the Webber cattle ranch. The other, owned by Mr. Abbott, a very fine Scotch gentleman, was located at the forks of the creek where Atwood is now located. Webber, to deter settlers from encroaching on his domain, was always raising the cry that the Indians had broken out and were raiding, killing and scalping. Mother took the matter somewhat to heart, and was quite disturbed. One day as Webber, with his wife and family, stopped in our yard on their way west to his ranch, he gave his usual Indian lingo, adding the last time he was up, he found "painted bones" on the prairie – a sure sign that the Indians were on the warpath! Father said to him to "pass that stuff on to someone else. Aren't you taking your family right into the place where the bones are? You can't scare us out, we don't believe in cattlemen Indian raids." That was his last attempt on father. Mr. Abbott often stopped at our home and assured us there were no Indians or he would know of them.

In later years Mr. Abbott moved to Hyannis with his son Arthur and while both father and son have passed away, his grandsons Chris and LeRoy are carrying on in a big way in the ranching and banking business.

1876 was a good normal year as to rainfall, the spring starting out with every promise of a crop – much additional land being broken on the valley and planted to corn, pumpkins, cane, melons, pie-melons and citron melons. Gold was discovered in the Black Hills and some of our people decided to make the trip and make their fortunes. Among these were two brothers, Friend Dickenson, and Wm. Halsay. Indians were troublesome that spring and General Custer with his cavalry were in the Black Hills territory.

I recall that in early spring before their departure for the Black Hills overland by wagon train, I was sitting in Sunday School near Mrs. Dickenson and they were singing "Sweet Hour of Prayer." When they came to that part of the song that said "and shout while passing through the air," I thought, 'oh, how I wish they could fly through the air and avoid the Indians.' They traveled to Sidney and then joined a large caravan and by way of Buffalo Gap arrived at Deadwood without mishap. The flying machine has since been perfected, and while it can be made an implement of helpfulness in emergencies where time is an element to be considered, the use to which it was put in the World War and the use being made of it in the present war in Europe in the destruction of life and property without discrimination—which if continued will destroy civilization itself—makes one wish the inventive genius of man had not been endowed with the ability to invent it. It certainly is a curse to civilization and should be openly condemned as such.

In early May, 1876, Jesse Kilgore desired a herder for his cattle and hearing of father having a couple of boys through Drell Annis, our neighbor boy employed by John Welborn, his neighbor rancher, Mr. Kilgore and part of his family drove a spring wagon to our home. Father needed Will, my elder brother, but thought he could spare me, then to be eleven years of age in a couple of months. I was hired for $8.00 per month, board, mending and washing. As our father was never in good health, we boys early assumed responsibilities beyond our years. This was true in my case now, and I do feel it to be of interest to describe conditions surrounding my employment then as compared with conditions now familiar to you.

First, never lose sight of the fact that there was constant talk of Indians on the war-path, and to me that talk had an element of reality. Second, settlements were only along the valleys of Kansas and Nebraska in the western part, with the upland divides, which constituted by far the major portion of the land, wholly uninhabited. A distance of ten miles south up School creek, a dry canyon with tributaries, was my herding range. The Kilgore family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Kilgore, William-19, who did the farming, Emmarancy and Emmarandy, twins-14, Arilla-11, Lusetta-9, and Mary-7, to which I was added making nine.

The home was of log structure and as I recall not to exceed 16 x 18 feet in size, 1¼ stories high, low ceiling and upper story reached by ladder through a hole, then ladder removed and again replaced to get down. The lower room was kitchen, dining room, bedroom, sitting room and parlor combined, and it has always been a puzzle to me how we managed to all stow away and live in that small home, but we did. On the ground floor was one bed and under it a trundle bed. Perhaps seven of the family slept on those two, perhaps another bed was made on the floor. I never knew. William and I slept in the attic on the floor. The walls were two feet high and the center about four and a half – I know that I, then a boy, could not stand straight in the center. Our attic had only one half window and it in the south, and was the room hot following a hot day? Another thing this attic had was an army of bed bugs steadily multiplying, no need for recruiting officers. You boys and girls of today compare those conditions with yours if you can and you will vision a part of the price of winning the West.

In the fall of 1875, our father bought a registered white Shorthorn bull calf. We boys loved it. Mr. J. K. Kilgore, Mr. J. W. Welborn and Mr. J. E. Berger had all come from Cass county, Nebraska, in 1873, bringing with them their herds of high-grade Shorthorn cattle and I fell in love with the Kilgore herd, of which I was to have charge, at once. Mr. Kilgore went out with me a few forenoons to familiarize me with the different parts of the range, beyond which I was not to permit the cattle to go, either on the Jesse Welborn range on the east or the J. E. Berger range on the west. In a few days I was put on my own. I loved the cattle, made friends of and petted the calves, watched the antelopes playing and feeding in the distance, and got along very well until my brother Will visited me on July 2 and 3 and when he left I was so homesick I about cried my eyes out and thought I would die. I have always felt sorry for any homesick kid. The Custer Massacre by the Indians in June also added to my discomfort. To me—hearing of it—that Little Big Horn was very near, and constantly added to my fears as the Indian talks were numerous and frightening. Along in July, the cattle began to wander more—hunting water, as it became scarce in the water holes, and also better grass.

Mr. Gilgore was usually kind to me but at time had "spells," as his good wife called them, and then he would cuss me or his son. One evening on returning with the cattle after a hot day, he started in on me. The next day was also bad and the cattle restless, so I took a good long cry. Mr. John Welborn happened to come along, noticed I had been crying, and asked me what was the matter. I told him about the cussing and the reason, also that I had done the best I could and I thought if he gave me another tonight, which I feared he would, I would quit and go home. Mr. Welborn was a very kindly man, a man of whom I thought a great deal and a man whom I loved and cherished until his death many, many years after this event. Mr. Welborn said very kindly to me, "Forster, Mr. Kilgore is usually kind to you, isn't he?" I replied that he was. Then he asked, "This is your first real job away from home, is it not?" I replied that it was. Then Mr. Welborn said to me, "Now Forster, let me tell you something. There are a lot of hard things that come up through life and if you quit this, your first job, because of a hard thing, and I grant it is a hard thing, you will be a quitter, and never make good." I stuck to my job until the migrating grasshoppers destroyed the crops in August. The cattle were turned loose and my service no longer required. Years afterward, when I was president of the bank in Indianola, the town in which we both lived, I reminded Mr. Welborn of this incident and he remembered it. I also, by choice of the Kilgore family, was the administrator of the Kilgore estate and was privileged, in the light of subsequent events, to have served them faithfully and well.

That year, 1876, the migrating grasshoppers destroyed all our crops except a watermelon patch of a few acres and some sugar cane. Father saved the melons in the following manner: When George N. Gilbert died in the spring of 1875 he had bought several hundred buffalo hides. No one to look after them. They were soon made valueless by buffalo bugs eating more or less holes in them. Father tried an experiment by hauling those hides down to the melon patch, placing them so the wind would blow the smoke over the patch, and setting them on fire. They made a good, lasting slow smoke, drove off the hoppers, kept others from lighting, and saved the melons. Early in September he hauled a load of them, camping on the way, to Fort McPherson and sold them to the soldiers, realizing $25 cash for them. This was a lot of help in buying some real necessities for the family. Since the hoppers did not eat our cane, we had plenty of sorghum; also wild plums, grapes, some pumpkins and citrons. During the winter of 1877 father killed five buffalo on the Big

Timber south of the now Benkelman, Dundy county, Nebraska,—his last buffalo. So with our milk cows and feed we got by pretty well.

1877.

Wm. T. Henton, one of our neighbors, obtained an additional yoke of oxen, and thus having two yoke of oxen decided to freight supplies from Sidney to the Black Hills. In the spring of 1877, leaving Sidney with a large company of folks with similar teams and supplies, he started for the hills by way of Buffalo Gap, and then up the prairie route, then up the canyon route to Deadwood. Before reaching the stockade on the prairie route after leaving Buffalo Gap, they were surrounded by a large band of Indians, and quickly threw their caravan in a circle with their ox teams in the enclosure and began to protect themselves. The fight lasted most of the afternoon, no freighter being hit. After dark, Mr. Henton, having a saddle horse of about 1200 pound weight, managed to get out and went for help about 60 miles distant and secured a company of cavalry, who arrived in the afternoon pretty well toward evening, drove the Indians away, and they went on to Deadwood without further mishap. Mr. Henton made a number of trips that spring and summer without any further skirmish with the Indians. He kept this horse, which he called Bill, until quite old, feeding and stabling him in winter, and running in pasture in summer, saying, "He saved my life, I can't be too good to him." One morning when turned in the lot, in a playful mood, Bill jumped over the fence and injured himself inside, and died in a few minutes. Mr. Henton in telling me about it said, "I sat on old Bill and almost cried." Such was the comradeship of those days, even between man and his horse, by reason of the dangers faced together.

The year 1877 was a year of normal rainfall and again we and our neighbors planted spring crops — some spring wheat, corn and the usual melons, pumpkins, citrons, and pie-melons. By this time we had accumulated some cattle and, by taking in cattle belonging to the neighbors at 20c per head per month, I again became the boy herder for the season, leaving in the morning for the canyons north of us and returning at night. It was a lonesome job, but not so much so as the summer before, for this summer I was home.

After the corn was laid by, father and brother Will drove to Fairmont and Geneva, Nebraska to work in the harvest fields. Will drove the team to a Marsh Harvester, and father and the owner did the binding. They worked in the shocking and threshing and returned home with real flour to eat, which was a treat as our bread had been corn bread, not from choice but necessity, and it was of the unmixed coarse variety.

We raised plenty of all things planted in 1877, good wild hay, and the outlook began to be quite cheerful for us and our neighbors. Sugar cane did so well on the sod that father thought broom-corn might be a paying crop so he obtained some seed and planted quite a field of it. It seemed to be good and required a lot of hand labor in breaking it over in what was called "tabling," and then cutting with pocket knives at a certain place, booting it—that is, leaving the boot on the stock and a long stem on the brush—then piling it to dry so it would not heat. We had no machinery to remove the seed, so we boys did it by one of us lifting the top box of the wagon, the other sticking in two or three of the brushes, then letting down the top box and pulling out the brush. This did a good job but the poison of the seed was hard on our eyes. The job took about a week. Father contrived to press the broom-corn in bales in some manner, loaded it on our wagon and father and I, with grain for our horses and grub box for ourselves, started to Plum Creek to sell it. After arriving in Plum Creek we discovered the only prospective buyer seemed to have plenty. He finally offered us $7.50 for it and we took it, when we had expected $50! We never planted any more broom-corn.

At this time, we were having three months' school a year, and every day of it was school—no time lost in anything else—and as I look back on those first few years of school now, we had good instruction in the essentials and a large field opened for interesting home study.

Friend Dickenson, who has been previously mentioned as going to the Black Hills, decided not to come back and sent word with Wm. Halsey that if anyone wanted his claim to take it. To show the neighborliness of the folks in those days, Wm.

Halsey walked ten miles to our place to bring this information, knowing father had very little timber on his claim and also knowing that he, father, was going to prove up on his pre-emption and desired to use his homestead right on land with timber. Father proved up—started a contest on the Dickenson farm which contained three quarters of a mile of creek and timber, in February, 1878, made a dugout and moved in. This 160 was about four miles east of our first location, remained in the family as long as father and mother lived and is now the property of my brother Will, who is making his home on it in the frame house that father built. As we lived in this dugout from February, 1878 until November, 1879, I will describe it. It was all dug out of a bank, about 14 feet wide and 28 feet long, having a half window in the east with a trench dug out so light and air could get in, a double skylight on the roof, screened over, usual ridge log and rafters, dirt floors and a gangway about 20 feet long leading to the door on the south. The door had a half window in it. When father made it, he intended to build a sod house that fall but could not get to it as the Indian raid changed conditions.

In the spring of 1878, having been three years from the time father filed on his timber claim, it was time to plant ten acres of timber. At the time that he filed, the law required the planting of forty acres of timber in rows twelve feet apart and the trees could be twelve feet apart but not any farther apart. Thus beginning the third year, ten acres were to be planted each year until the forty acres were planted and the required number of trees were growing to prove up.

Early in the spring father and I, with some others, went over to the Republican river sand bars and pulled thousands of small cottonwoods from eighteen inches to two feet high for planting. We planted them in rows in this manner: four feet apart in the row and the rows twelve feet apart. The ground had all been plowed, then father and Will plowed a furrow, then they plowed another furrow in the bottom of that furrow, making a furrow fully twelve inches deep. After which my sister, Ella, and I stood the trees against the straight side of the bank, and they plowed the ridge back into the furrow, covering them. This did a good job and gave us a good stand of trees. There is still a grove of those cottonwood trees living now (in 1940) in a swale or depression of a few acres, but most of them died many years ago.

The law was soon changed from forty acres to ten acres four feet each way and this we planted later in that manner in ash trees, had enough live to prove up, but when they grew to be large enough to require more moisture than we naturally had, all soon died. Hence from experience I have no faith in the so-called "Roosevelt Shelter Belt."

The year 1878 was a good normal season, plenty of rain; still the divides had no settlers.

J. E. Berger, desiring to save his home range south of the Republican for winter range, made a deal with father for us to take his cattle on our range—about 150 head—at 20c per head a month. With our cattle, thus I again became a herder from May until late September, going out in the morning and returning at night, but as the year before it had its compensations. I was home with the family nights, and liked the work with the cattle. They were of very fine quality Shorthorns.

I was thirteen that summer, growing beyond my years, and the responsibility I had been assuming made me feel quite a man. We had good crops of all kinds and really felt that we were being kindly dealt with. Wild hay was good and in the stack in plenty for our cattle and horses, also a quantity of corn in the fields. The wet season, however, had caused a late growth of weeds and tickle grass to grow luxuriantly in most of the corn fields. Keep this in mind when I tell about the great fire set by the Indians later on.

Chapter XVII

School Days and Recreation

MOVING in the pioneers sequence the author brings us into the organization of those fortunates that have been the best and most salutary defenses of our state, nation, its constitution and the training of American minds for conference. The establishment of a country school at the cross roads, in a building just a little better than the average dwelling has been many a pioneer community's first triumph. There was found a touch of taste from every home, and also that community interest in the future welfare of neighbors and the keen zeal for our common wealth and country. No wonder study was stimulated, tongues loosened, poets inspired, orators developed and legislators made ambitions. What difference that gramatic rules were not always followed or that there were mixed metaphors?

The common schools of America were the well springs of American statesmanship, and what may have been the source of much good the games at the parties, in homes or in the outdoors, in a measure were means of American young men and women, joining their poverty, futures or wealth, established American patriotic loyal and industrious homes, which make America strong.

In this chapter there is seen a slight let-down when the subject of trapping with the skunk and his greases and aroma is suddenly flashed into such prominence. The writer will not be harsh, because both Homer and Stilgebouer "sometimes nod."

I read a plaintive note in several places where the author bewails a somewhat iconoclastic effect of the "arrival of the railroads." Nearly every soldier's sword has had two edges. Many have been the community railway stations that seemed to promise a Metropoli only to be peopled for a few decades where homes, churches, schools, and libraries have been established, when the genius of centralization have come underway, and then the county seats, capitals and metropoli sow in their own way the seed for grass in the streets and alleys of the once ambitious burgs, leaving many saddened Auburns.

* * *

In moving down the valley about four miles in February, 1878, we moved out of District No. 4 into unorganized territory. Father led and with others organized School District No. 12.

Our land was the southwest quarter of section eighteen, township one, range twenty-seven, and they decided to make a dugout on the northeast quarter of section twenty-four, township one, range twenty-eight, it being centrally located in the newly organized school district. This was about three quarters of a mile from our home. My brother Will and I helped in the digging and construction and, when completed, it resembled very much our first school in District No. 4—a small dugout, similar seats, no desks, one-half window in the south and one-half window in the door. We had a three months' school in the early spring of 1878, taught by S. F. McDonald, and as I look back on that little three months' school, I am sure we had a good teacher in the essentials and all worked hard and made progress.

In the early fall of 1878, a new sod school house was built on the same land just down the hill on the level bottom near the creek. The construction was of the usual sod and ridge logs, one crossing in center and a log extending from each end of the building to the cross center log, resting thereon. The ends were built up with sod towards the center so as to give proper pitch to the roof—then rafters cut from timber rested on the walls and ridge logs and on the rafters, willows, then hay—then sod and dirt. The walls were three feet thick. The school house when completed was about 36 feet long, 14 feet wide and 7 feet to rafters near the walls above the floor. It had a door in the east, a window in the west and two windows on each side.

About this time, an agent for school supplies called at our home, father being a member of the board, and wanted to sell school supplies, such as desks, seats, globe and maps. We were still living in our dugout and father sent brother Will up and down the creek to ask folks to meet at our home the next evening and decide what to do about it, if anything. They came, single men and married men, and the first thing to decide after the agent explained the cost and time he would give on the purchase was a floor for the schoolhouse. Father and Mr. Allington figured the approximate cost of material, all work donated by them including going to Naponee, Nebraska to get the material. Then they discussed how to raise the money, as cash was required. Donations were decided on. The agent led out with $3.00, father followed with $3.00, Allington followed with $3.00, Jesse and Barnet Ashton with $3.00 each, Joe and Gene Dolph with $3.00 each, then others until the sum was raised. The lumber was acquired, the floor laid, seats and desks purchased and placed. We really had a palatial schoolhouse. Remember what we had been having, then picture this in your mind, with the walls of sod plastered white with native lime, floor, seats and desks and plenty of light. It was indeed a comfort and an inspiration. This schoolhouse was used until the coming of the railroad in 1887 and the town of Danbury near by started. It was not only used for school, but church and Sunday School as well, and as a community center for Lyceums and amusements. I have thought well of agents ever since and been grateful to the single men, who were in the majority, for they worked and gave their money that we might have the opportunity the school afforded. My last year of school was a six months' term in this schoolhouse at the age of 20 in mostly eighth and ninth grade work, being taught by Seth Parsons, as fine and conscientious a teacher as I ever knew. He opened up a field of reading and home study for me which I greatly profited by, and my gratitude to him years later was shown when I, as a member of a school board, recommended him as superintendent of our schools and he secured the job and made good.

Recreation.

As the divides were settled with newcomers, some with families of older boys, others young married and single men, baseball organizations were brought about in many localities, particularly Indianola, Coon Creek near by, Danbury, Lebanon, and Cedar Bluffs. I was a member of Danbury's first nine and my brother

Will of the second nine. Both teams had a number of substitutes. We set aside Saturday afternoons on our diamond, centrally located, for practice and match games. The people generally, men and women, attended and all enjoyed the sport. Visiting teams were entertained in our homes as we were in theirs in the playing of matched games. The effort in playing the game was as sincere as though a pennant were at stake. The umpire was a neighbor and his decision, right or wrong, final. No curb pitching in the earlier hard-hitting, home-runs in evidence which added zest to the sport, and always the best of feeling prevailed. This country sport, like the lyceum, practically ended with the coming of the railroad, and the organization of town teams. The latter organizations in the late 80's and 90's, with their wagers and arguments, soon spoiled the sport and it lost in interest and attendance. The last game I played with the Danbury team was at Wilsonville in 1889, a good close game in which we won by a small margin. I always enjoyed the sport and do yet, a good clean ball game. It is a good American sport and I would like to see it revived in the small towns in the old sportsman-like manner. The trouble is, the desire to win overlaps the spirit of the sport, rather than exact fairness and sportsmanship in playing the game.

In those early days we usually celebrated the Fourth of July. The first celebration I know of on the Beaver was July 4th, 1876. I was herding cattle on the Republican, but I know of it by my brother Will's attendance and report. They had a good time and it was largely attended by the settlers on the valley. In the forenoon, a program consisting of the reading of the Declaration of Independence, patriotic songs, short talks by settlers, and then a picnic dinner. In the afternoon, sports of various kinds and then home after a happy day.

This day was observed in a fitting manner for many years, and to some extent after the railroad came up the Beaver and the town of Danbury was organized. I recall the last year I attended at my old home town was in the middle 90's when living at Bartley. Their engaged speaker was sick, so I was pressed in as a "pinch-hitter." Being very familiar with the "Historical Facts," I reviewed and discussed many of these, told some amusing anecdotes of settlers present, and closed with an earnest plea to keep up the celebrations on each recurrent year for their patriotic educational value. Usually at such picnics in the afternoon for amusement, foot races were run, baseball match-games were played and platform dances were held, lasting until late evening. For many years now, the towns in which I have lived have passed this great day and what it represents simply as just another holiday, thus losing the sentimental and patriotic value of the time and cause for which earlier generations celebrated the day. Should we ever lose our liberty and form of government, it will no doubt be by reason of the older generations becoming careless in such observances, which afford opportunity for instilling into the minds and souls of the young its sacrifice and cost, and the many reasons for it being brought forth and preserved.

One of the great statesmen of that time, John Adams, said of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, that, "Future generations will celebrate this day." Have we outgrown such an expression of its sentiments and values? If we have, the penalty may be paid in the loss of our liberties, for it has well been said, "That eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." To this, we must add a knowledge of its cost.

Christmas.

In the early days, community Christmas observance was usually in a schoolhouse, which was decorated as appropriately as circumstance and conditions would permit. I recall our first Christmas in an abandoned half sod and half dugout on land adjoining the now town of Marion on the north. It was the year 1876. The gathering of the settlers at that time and place was looked forward to by all those living within a radius of six to eight miles in either direction up and down the Beaver. About a week before Christmas of that year, the weather was mild, ground not frozen, when it began to rain, and it rained for three days and nights. The sod houses and dugouts sifted the dirty water down through their dirt roofs, until bedding, clothes and everything was wet and dirty. You may well ask, how did you get by? Well, we got by in eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty, and sleeping between wet and dirty sheets and quilts on beds of hay or straw.

Did it spoil our Christmas? "Not on your life." When the rain ceased, the sun shone and it did not turn cold for the time of year. Father sent me with an ax over to Houton homestead (the abandoned home where we were to hold our Christmas) and my instructions were to cut some dead wood, build a fire in the fireplace and dry the house out. This I did for four days and on the fourth day those who had the decorating in charge were on the job and by evening preparations were complete. They came as planned and a splendid visit and suitable program of song and talks was carried out. Then the treats—popcorn balls and candy in sufficient quantity for all present. No store candy or homemade candy with sugar as now, but of the good old sorghum variety of which the settlers had plenty. After a good old-time visit by our elders, and the young playing games outdoors, we were called in and a lap supper was served of cornbread, buffalo meat, plum preserves and wild grape jam, the latter two preserved and sweetened with the ever-present sorghum molasses. While we all had pie pumpkin, there were no pies, simply because there was no flour to make the crust. It has been said that "where there is a will, there is a way." As I look back after these many intervening years and recall the grasshopper destruction of crops that year, I feel that the settlers needed this social gathering and touch of their former civilization, so they had the "will" and provided the "way." We all had a good time and it was often referred to when meeting each other.

Trapping.

In the early years, we young people had a lot of enjoyment in trapping and this resulted in some profit as well. When we settled on the Beaver in 1875, the creek was lined with large boxelder, hackberry, and elm trees. Many of the older trees had holes near the bottom of their trunks and wood rats, or pack-rats as many called them, were numerous and built their nests around those trees, by cutting with their rabbit-like teeth the small sticks from undergrowth and carrying or "packing" them to the base of the trees which were hollow-based and an entrance to them. These were built in mounds, sometimes as high as three feet and a like distance across. A runway from the outside was built which made entrance to the hollow tree. Single spring traps were set in this runway and usually got the rats. They were clannish and each such tree and nest contained a number of rats. They were light gray in color, much larger than the ordinary rat, and their fur was very soft and pleasing to the touch. The hide was tender and care had to be exercised in skinning in order not to tear or mar them. When properly skinned and dried, the winter catch usually sold for from eight to ten cents each. The great and destructive fire of 1878 ended rat catching, as it burnt their nests, suffocated the rats in the tree trunks and literally destroyed them all. I do not recall of seeing a rat after that fire. It also killed the trees. We also trapped for skunks, which were numerous in the early days. They burrowed in the ground and usually were caught by setting a trap in their holes near the outlet. I recall one time when Will and I were setting a string of traps, double spring traps were used for all except rats, and as we were young it took our combined efforts to set them; I would stand on one spring, he on the other and then Will would reach under and lift the pan that set the trap. In some way—we never knew if the fault of Will or I—the trap sprung and caught Will on the fleshy part of his hand, inside and below the thumb. It was very painful and in our effort to release him by stepping on the springs, also being excited, we twisted the trap several times. At last we both pressed the spring right and released his hand. There was no permanent damage but it was very painful for the time being and it made us much more careful, so that it never occurred again.

We also trapped for swifts, the fur of which was prized by early settlers in making caps. We received from ten to fifteen cents for skunk hides and twenty-five to thirty-five cents for swifts. They soon became extinct. They were similar to a fox in conformation but lived in burrows in the ground. We also trapped for coon and coyote, their hides being from twenty-five to fifty cents each. It was quite a thrill to follow your trap line of about a dozen traps and get a skunk, swift, coon or coyote. We trapped more or less pretty well through the seventy's and well into the eighty's. In winter or late fall the skunk was unusually fat, a thick layer of fat from mid-side over its back. This fat was saved and fried or rendered out and used for lighting purposes by some folks in this manner: A rag was sewed around a bullet with the ends sticking up and this grease was put in a deep saucer, and then the ends of the rag were lit, the fire drawing the grease up the rag, and it burned and made a fair light, for those days. I have studied many a lesson with this sort of light. We also used this grease or skunk oil, as it was called, for it was always oily, not solidifying as does lard, in greasing our boots and harness, and it served admirably for this purpose. By being very careful in skinning the skunk, the fat could be secured without tainting it with the aroma, so offensive to the "elite." We also caught a good many badgers in those days; this also was done by locating their holes or dens and setting the traps as for skunks. They also had an aroma of a displeasing nature, but their hides sold for twenty-five to thirty-five cents which, like the skunk, made some profit. I, after growing in ability to set the traps, did most of the trapping, skinning and preparing the furs for market. At the time of which I am writing it was one method of recreation and sport, especially in winter. There were many coon and skunks destroyed along the creek by the fire I mentioned, but skunks also inhabited the prairies and canyons, as did badgers and coyotes, so that trapping was carried on until the divide settlers joined in, and so many soon thinned the game until the returns were too meager as to the effort expended and the sport was abandoned.

Lyceum.

A lyceum was organized, now that we had a suitable place and comfortable conditions. Its purpose was two-fold; first, to meet socially as a community and enjoy the association such an opportunity afforded, and the second was amusement, and educational. Our programs were divided as per above, the first being music, songs and readings—recitations we called them then—and the second, debate on questions that were educational and informative in character. There was no lack of participants in either division, mature and young people taking part. It was the taking of an active part in the debates from my early youth to manhood that was not only educational in the subject matter, but it laid the foundation in my personality of meeting the public, and gave that confidence and courtesy in meeting opposing viewpoints that has been helpful to me as a man before the public throughout my business career as a banker. A business that requires tact, firmness, courtesy, and a knowledge of how to read and analyze statements quickly. I enjoyed those debates very much; they widened my viewpoint, and I realized through the opposing speakers that there are two sides to every question with the same certainty that there are two sides to a plank. If this were not true, it would not be a question and would not be debatable. In addition to the things mentioned in the first division, we and some others had a "Lyceum paper," edited by different folks, some young, some mature. In this paper the happenings of the community were set forth in the "personal" column. The advertisements covered some neighbor in a grotesque and ludicrous manner and stories were written of individuals that portrayed them, especially the young, as being lawyers, doctors, bankers and successful business men and farmers, some of which have since come true. All this to entertain and promote good neighborly feeling. At times, plays were rendered, with young and mature being associated in the work. With these, the entire evening was devoted to it. Good times, yes, we made our own amusements and had good times in practice and rendition.

As the divides were settled in 1879 and 1880 and schoolhouses built, lyceums and Sunday Schools were organized in many of them, thus religiously and secularly establishing community centers of value, socially and educationally, for their progress. These lyceums or literary societies, as some were called, continued through the late fall, winter and early spring months, until the coming of the Burlington railroad up the Beaver Valley the fall of 1887, thus ushering in a new era through the towns being established. Other amusements and interests superseded the lyceums and they ceased to exist. I have often regretted this fact, for nothing brought by the towns adequately substituted for the social and educational value of the lyceums displaced. In those years, we often visited each other's communities in a body, taking part in their literary productions and debates. We also visited each other's Sunday Schools, and arranged for and had Sunday School picnics, a part of the program being given by each school.

All this added much in the widening of our acquaintances and the strengthening of our social and religious life.

The years 1879 and 1880 were the years of "newcomers," as we called them, and practically all of the best land on the divide between the Beaver and Republican was taken up by homesteaders. Our father was unable to work, being subject to severe sick headaches, but was usually all right if he did not overdo. He was also otherwise afflicted as a result of his Civil War service so we boys, Will and I, did all we could to care for the work and relieve him. At that, in the way of chores and odd jobs, he did much more than we knew or thought at the time.

Father conceived the idea of getting from the land office at North Platte plats of our portion of the county covering four townships—12 miles square—an which was marked the land that had been taken. Thus he knew the land and locations open for settlement. Right here I want to say that father never took a dime for his knowledge or services and nearly every land-seeker ate meals with us, and no charge as father said they would be neighbors. Father spent a great deal of time in 1879 and 1880 in locating these newcomers. It was his plan and purpose to hold the land in our school district for men of families, and to locate the single men and newly-weds farther away. As good land, but his idea was to build up our school and community.

Chapter XVIII

Indian Raid, 1878, from Kansas Historical Society

THIS chapter opens with reference to one of the American school classics—a McGuffey Reader. The series which now is available and which many have purchased to read, or re-read, the many fine stories, proverbs, historical facts that more than a century ago were found in many of the pioneer schools in woods or on plains.

This chapter is largely a compilation of correspondence, which is of course, highly interesting to the investigating student, but a casual reader may find it somewhat tedious, because it sets forth a wealth of statistics and a volume of correspondence valuable as the core of the apple which contains the seed, but not as interesting as the luscious flesh. It illustrates however the extraordinary industry of the author in establishing important data and commending facts.

* * *

In one of the McGuffy readers is a story about a boy who was herding sheep and, as there were wolves in the forest, he was told "To call for help if any wolves attempted to molest his sheep." The boy, thinking to have some fun, one day cried out, "Help! Help! the wolf is coming!" The men came running with clubs and axes to destroy the wolf, but saw no trace of him so returned to their homes. The next day, having had so much fun, the boy cried out again, "Help! Help! the wolf is coming!" The men came running again but not so many as before. Seeing no trace of the wolf they shook their heads and went home. The third day the wolf came in earnest. The boy cried out in dismay, "Help!! Help! the wolf is coming, the wolf is coming!" but not a single man came to help him. 'The truth itself is not believed from one who often has deceived.'

This is very applicable to the Indian Raid in the fall of 1878. Scarcely had a month passed during our residence in Nebraska, but what reports were circulating of Indians on the warpath, and when you remember that the Beecher Island fight was only seven years before we came here, the Sappa fight the spring we came here, and the Custer Massacre in 1876, there was enough foundation in things that had happened to keep us, to some extent, on edge—doubting, yet believing—and when in the fall of 1878, rumors for some three weeks had been persistent that Indians had broken away from the reservation and were indeed and in truth killing folks, we were kept in a state of constant tension. They did come, and were on the warpath.

First, in writing the History of the Indian Raid of 1878 I have copied some of the facts as set forth in the Kansas State Historical Society 1910—11 volume of their movements and depredations across the State of Kansas.

Second, I am writing of the part that my people and neighbors took and experienced in this, the last Indian raid of the great plains region.

The stories and facts now follow:

Marking an Epoch — The Last Indian Raid and Massacre

Last Indian Raid and Massacre, 1878, in Northwest Kansas, and Southwest Nebraska. I quote from the *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the State Historical Society, Kansas,* 1911-1912.

Quote:

"On the 30th of September, 1911, there was unveiled and dedicated at Oberlin, in Decatur county, a monument not only to the memory of certain massacred pioneers, but a marker of the last Indian raid in Kansas, marking the date when western Kansas escaped from the violence of Indian warfare and entered into permanent state of peace, comfort and development. On the 30th of September, 1878, a party of Northern Cheyennes made the last Indian raid into Kansas, killing nineteen citizens of Decatur county. The band was composed of about 400, led by Chief Dull Knife. The legislature of 1909, through the efforts of Hon. J. D. Flannigan, donated to Decatur county $1500, to be expended upon such a marker. The commissioners of Decatur county for $300 placed a substantial cement foundation. The monument is twenty-two feet high above the base. On the west side is this inscription: "In memory of the Pioneer Settlers of Decatur County, killed in the last Indian Massacre in Kansas, by a band of Northern Cheyenne Indians, September 30, 1878"; also on the west side is this inscription: "Erected by the State of Kansas and Decatur County, 1911." On the north, south, and east sides are the names of nineteen persons, as follows: John Young, James S. Smith, William Laing, Sr., William Laing, Jr., John C. Laing, Freeman Laing, John Humphrey, E. O. Humphrey, John C. Hudson, George F. Walters, Moses F. Abernathy, Mr. Lull, Ferdinand Westphalen and son, John Irwin, Marcellus Felt, John Wright, Edward Miskelley, Frederick Hemper. Hon. W. L. Brown, of Kingman, was the orator of the occasion. There can be no more significant marker than one indicating a change from the red to the white man.

This last raid is a most interesting and startling period in the history of Kansas—interesting because it was the last, and startling because of the circumstances of a band of Indians spending two weeks in crossing the state from south to north, murdering citizens and destroying property, the people along the line of their march daily calling for help, the only government troops being infantry, and a major general constantly asserting that there were no Indians within a hundred miles. We turn to our archives department and we find a bunch of telegrams and letters showing a trail of destruction and murder as distinct as a line of fire, crossing two lines of railroad and telegraph. Looking back from this distance the whole thing seems incredible, and can only be explained by the frequency of Indian scares, but this was too real. Hence the historical importance of the monument and demonstration at Oberlin on the thirty-third anniversary of the end of their destruction and the final disappearance of the Indians over the line. Here is the story of that last raid in the correspondence we have from the governor's office, placed with this Society, under the archives law of 1905:

Cimarron, Kan., (Sept.) 7, 1878.

"Gov. Anthony, Lawrence, Kan.: Indians have broken away from Fort Reno going north and will pass here. Please send us fifty stand of amrs and ammunition and a company of soldiers immediately for our protection. We appeal to you for them by order of the Committer."

Dodge City, Kan., September 18, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony, Gov., Leavenworth, Kan.: Three hundred Indians are driving off stock and killing herders. They are now within six miles of our city. We are without arms and ammunition, having equipped members who have gone south. Can you send us arms and ammunition? Situation alarming. We are powerless without arms and ammunition.

James Kelly, *Mayor*
C. W. Willett
H. E. Gryden
D. Sheedy"

The foregoing telegrams from Dodge City were forwarded to General Pope, whose answer follows:

"Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Sept. 18, 1878

"Gov. Anthony: Gen. Pope in town. Telegram just received from commanding officer, Fort Dodge, who has for a week had his orders about these Indians, makes no mention of their being in the vicinity.

Platt, A.A.G."

The facts stated in General Pope's telegram were repeated to Mayor Kelly and others of Dodge City, who responded as follows:

"Dodge City, Kan., September 18, 1878.

"Gov. Anthony: No U. S. troops here, and no arms at post. The country filled with Indians. Send arms immediately. Breechloaders.

James H. Kelly, *Mayor.*"

"Dodge City, Kan., September 18, 1878.

"Gov. Anthony: Indians are murdering, and burning houses within three miles of town. All the arms we had have been sent. Can you send us arms and ammunition immediately?

H. SHINN
R. W. EVANS
C. W. WILLETT
T. L. McCARTY
JAMES C. CONNOR"

"Leavenworth, Kan., September 19, 1878.

"P.S. Noble, Adj. Gen.: Go to Dodge City with two hundred stand of arms and ammunition, on to-day's train, unless otherwise directed from there. Do not issue arms except upon receipt of officers of county or city, joined by five responsible citizens.

GEO. T. ANTHONY."

"Topeka, September 19, 1878.

"James H. Kelly, Mayor, Dodge City, Kan.: Adjutant General will come with arms and ammunition by to-day's train, if you still deem it necessary. Gen. Pope says there are not seventy-five warriors among the Indians now at large. Answer to Topeka.

GEO. T. ANTHONY."

Two telegrams received at Topeka, repeated to Governor Anthony, Leavenworth, by his private secretary, B. Gray:

"Topeka, Kan., September 19, 1878.

"Gov. G. T. Anthony, Leavenworth: Received at 2 p.m. the following: "Medicine Lodge, September 18th. The Indians are upon us. Send by Mr. Cochran, one hundred stand needle guns with ammunition. C. M. Cochran will give particulars.

WM. M. FRIEDLY,
Capt. Barbour County Militia."

"Hutchinson, September 19.

"Hostile band infest the south of Barbour and Comanche and up to 9 p.m. of 18th inst. ten persons had been killed and several wounded. Many horses and cattle stampeded and stolen. I telegraph requisition of Capt. Friedly in time I trust for to-day's train. One hundred needle guns and twenty thousand rounds will be necessary. Our people are entirely unarmed and delays are dangerous. Answer.

M. J. Cochran.'

"I had barely time to ship the sixty stand which were in store at the depot, by Mr. Noble, who will deliver them to-night to Mr. Cochran at Hutchinson.

B. Gray."

"Dodge City, September 20, 1878.

"Gov. Geo. T. Anthony: Have issued one hundred stand of arms and seven thousand rounds of ammunition to mayor of Dodge; forty stand and two thousand ammunition to citizens of Cimmaron; sixty stand and ammunition to Capt. Friedly, upon urgent request. All quiet at Dodge now, and citizens feel confident that they can meet any emergency. Rumors that Indians are near Lakin, and United States troops concentrating at other points. Shall return, as nothing further can be accomplished by staying.

P. S. Noble, *Adjutant General.*"

"Hutchinson, Kan., September 21, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony: Charles Chambers has just returned from Sun City and Medicine Lodge. He reports settlers being murdered by small squads of Indians. He saw a young man who was shot in the leg, and one wounded in the neck, a child shot in the breast, one camp on Salt Fork, where three men were killed. Armed squads of settlers were going round through the county gathering up women and children, and bringing them to Sun City. Mr. Chambers says the settlers are badly armed or not armed at all. The Indians are going around in squads of six and eight, getting such arms as they can from the homes of the settlers.

C. G. Coutant."

"Kinsley, September 21, 1878.

"Gov. Anthony: J. D. Crank and Jard Spencer have just returned from their cattle camps, forty miles south of Kinsley. They report that the Indians have been there and destroyed their camps, took all their ponies, and killed and stampeded their cattle. The Indians are on their way southwest. Will you commission J. W. Fuller, sheriff, Edwards county, to raise a company here with my assistance? Four men from Kinsley are known to have been killed. Please answer immediately.

J. E. McArthur, *County Attorney, Edwards County.*"

"Springvale P. O., Pratt Co., September 25, 1878.

"Mr. Anthony, Dear Sir: I received a letter from you this morning handed to me by our friend Mr. Nelson. Was pleased to see the interest you take in our Indian scare, which is much smaller than reported. Mr. Nelson and myself went to Sun City and found out all particulars in regard to Indian trouble. Mr. Nelson has the names of killed and wounded except two men. I consider no further trouble from Indians.

Yours, A. J. Johnson."

(The following notation is written in pencil on back of letter: "Killed on Salt Fork Reuben Briston, Frank Dow, Fred Clark. On Big Mile Creek, Mr. Evans.")

Correspondence and telegram relative to Meade county:

"Dodge City, Kan., September 29, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony, Governor of Kansas: The telegram mentioned in your favor of the 28th was sent at the request of Clark and others who fled from the Indians that killed Washington O'Connor at Meade City on Wednesday. They were unable to find signers to a bond which I prepared for them and wished the telegram sent in hope that you might think of some way to relieve them. Our citizens are already responsible for the return of a large amount of arms and did not feel like taking another burden. They have now returned to their homes and feel that the danger is over. The dispatches denying the committing of depredations by Indians in this section of country are wholly untrue, and a necessity for protection did exist, at the time arms were forwarded here. The state arms were used by the cattle men in the fight on Sand Creek within twenty-four hours after their arrival here. Many men have been killed and great damage done to stock and other interests, all other reports to the contrary notwithstanding.

Very respectfully,
Edward F. Colburn
(*City Attorney*)

The Barber and Comanche county victims of this raid numbered seven, as was reported by John W. McWilliams, Lee Bradley and S. Commings, in letter dated November 11, 1878, as follows:

"In reference to our close proximity to the recent Indian massacre would say, we are situated in the southwest of Barbour, and southeast of Comanche county. Now that the Indians did kill our neighbors, we can prove seven new made graves in Comanche, and two in the territory, also testify while at the same time three wounded persons stand as witnesses to their unprovoked atrocity, not a single shot being fired by the white men. We have buried these men. They were killed in the state of Kansas while peaceably pursuing their daily avocations."

M. J. Cochran, Barber county, reported ten persons killed in the counties on south border, prior to September 18.

"Governor Anthony: Reliable information has been received that eighteen white men were killed this morning by Indians, near Buffalo. Please send immediately one hundred guns and ammunition to Ellis, together with such other assistance as you can afford. We can furnish a number of volunteers.

Dave Rathbone."

"Buffalo, Kan., October 2, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony, Governor: Seventeen men known to be killed on Sappa; one wounded on Solomon, night before last; settlers in southern Nebraska in great danger. Surgeons from here with citizens' guard to go north. Will meet adjutant.

J. C. Henry."

"Leavenworth, October 2, 1878.

"J. C. Henry and David Rathbone, Ellis, Kan.: Had interview with General Pope, who says: No hostile Indians in Kansas; no

Cheyennes within a hundred miles of Buffalo to-day. Have you confirmation of dispatches sent me? Answer.

GEO. T. ANTHONY."

"WaKenney, Kan., October 2, 1878.

"Governor Anthony: Last reports confirm all Rathbone has telegraphed you. Troops in pursuit of main body, with prospect of capturing or turning them back.

We have positive information of scattering bands that the military authorities know nothing of; horrible outrages on streams northwest.

J. C. HENRY."

"Leavenworth, Kan., October 2, 1878.

"P. S. Noble, Adjutant General, Topeka, Kan.: Go west with arms and ammunition. J. C. Henry and D. Rathbone will meet you at Ellis. Issue arms only on good bond. Have asked railroad order.

GEO. T. ANTHONY."

"WaKeeney, Kan., October 3, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony: Three Indians seen this morning eleven miles north of here by Clark, whose word is as good as General Pope's.

J. F. KEENEY."

"Ellis, Kan., October 4, 1878.

"Gov. G. T. Anthony: If you will order an engine and car from here, I will go west and distribute arms at Wakeeney, Buffalo, Grinnell and Coyotte, where they need them more than in this place. There is no train out from Ellis until seven afternoon. Answer.

P. S. NOBLE, *Adjt. Gen.*"

(Governor Anthony's notation on telegram: "I telegraphed Superintendent Oakes at once to order an engine and car from Ellis west to those stations if he could, for distribution of arms.")

"Ellis, Kan., October 4, 1878.

"Governor G. T. Anthony: Be sure and get the letters from Edwards at once as they contain the truth as near as it can be got at.

P. S. NOBLE, *Adjt. Gen.*"

Correspondence of J. H. Edwards, Ellis, Kans.

"Ellis, Kan., October 2, 1878.

"Geo. T. Anthony, Esq., Governor of Kansas, My Dear Sir: I have refrained writing you in regard to the Indian difficulties in this section of the state because of the various rumors in regard thereto. Today, however, we have received a reliable dispatch from a gentleman who went to Buffalo for the purpose of obtaining information yesterday. He reports that a courier had just arrived from north bringing the body of Ed Miskelley of Buffalo, who had been killed with seventeen others, and that there were five more wounded, and asking for men and a surgeon. From all that I can gather, this fight took place on the Beaver some thirty miles north of Buffalo, and it is now feared that the Indians will turn east down the Solomon and kill very man of the settlers there. A new settler from Iowa was very badly wounded yesterday some ten miles north of Buffalo and brought into the station for medical attention. One physician, Dr. Gochenaur, went up and reports the chances are against his recovery. A party of twenty and more men with horses and arms left here at 2 p.m. to-day for scene of action. Should the troops advancing from the north meet these Indians, in order to escape the troops pursuing from the south, they may turn east and southeast, and this would bring them through Norton, Graham and Ellis counties. Now, sir, under these circumstances will you not send us some arms and ammunition and authority to organize. The guns I had, had been already distributed at points where danger was apprehended. There may be no more occasion for alarm, but judging from my past experiences with the plains Indians, I rather think we will have more or less trouble all the fall. The government troops left Carlisle, Wallace and Sheridan on 28th and as far as I know have not been heard from. I understand that most of the troops are infantry. From the time elapsed I am of opinion that the troops have missed the Indians who are now raiding further east. Your immediate attention is respectfully solicited to this matter, as it is very evident that the government is not fully prepared for the emergency. Hoping to hear from you at once by telegram, I'm, Governor,

your obedient servant, Jno. H. Edwards.

"P. S.—The seventeen men were killed on the Sappa, and five wounded. One man was wounded on Prairie Dog and Miskelley was killed on South Fork of Solomon. Sheridan and Shibboleth post offices were burned, and Smith's camp on Sappa was captured on 28th at 2 p.m., and from last reports received the Indians were there on the 29th at 6 p.m. fully 24 hours. J.H.E."

Buffalo, October 3, 1878.

"My Dear Sir: Since my letter of yesterday from Ellis I have not heard anything new in relation to the state of affairs over north. On my way up here this A.M., Mr. Keeney, of WaKeeney, in Trego county, informed me that a Mr. Clark had come in from the Saline, eleven miles north, and seen three Indians this side of the river. Gentlemen here also say that they saw Indians south and north of here yesterday and today in parties of two and three. This leads me to the conclusion that small bodies of Indians must be leaving the reservation from time to time encouraged by the success of the larger body. There is but little doubt in my opinion that at least fifty whites have been killed during the raid. There are some ten or twelve not heard from. They have had full time for report. I am expecting parties in from north, and should any new developments be made, will write you. Respectfully, JNO. H. EDWARDS."

"Buffalo, October 3, 1878.

To Governor Geo. T. Anthony, Topeka, My Dear Sir: An hour since I wrote you and as the mails are now closed will put this on train. Some parties are just in from Sappa and corroborate all I have previously written. They buried seventeen bodies yesterday, and up to 12 o'clock last night had seen and talked with parties from the Beaver. The Indians after leaving the Sappa went over to the Beaver and cleaned it out for twenty-five miles, burning everything. The two men that brought the news to the Sappa found three small children on the prairie in night clothes and brought them along. They also (although it was in the night) found five bodies and saw no one near the burning buildings. The soldiers were in camp some three miles south of the Beaver at that time and reported having found ten more bodies. They had not caught up with the Indians, but at last accounts were still some eight or ten miles in the rear of them. There was a large party of Bohemians settled on the Beaver and the report is that the Indians killed quite a number of them. Judging from the progress made by the Indians, they must have crossed the state line yesterday, and the main body are without doubt now out of the state, and unless they are turned back by troops from the north we will not have any more trouble with them, but may have from roving bands. The people are homeless and in want of clothing and provisions. We sent out a party from Ellis and they were met by the men who brought this news, on the Prairie Dog this A.M., headed from the Beaver. The arms in this vicinity are all out and but few at that. If arms are procured from adjutant general a party will leave here in A.M., to follow up and relieve the wants of those who have been burned out. The Indians appear to have avoided the cow camps and only raided on citizens. I am given to understand that by dispatch to-night a report goes to General Pope from the troops in the field. Governor, this is a terrible thing, a small force of Indians leisurely making their way for nearly twenty days across the country, and the troops as leisurely following, and not even capturing or killing an Indian, and yet, as you are told by the general commanding, not a hostile or Cheyenne Indian within a hundred miles. I will as soon as ascertained correctly, send you in names of parties killed.

Respectfully, Jno. H. Edwards

"P.S.—Killed as far as names are known, Lang (Laing), and three sons, Hudson, Kaley, Smith, Humphrey, Miskelley, Young, Abernathy, Ferdinand and son, 13 in all so far recognized, leaving four of the 17 to be known. J.H.E."

Correspondence of O. P. Hamilton, Land Agent, Kansas Pacific railway.

"Governor Anthony, Topeka, Kan., Dear Sir: The undersigned being here on business for land department, Kansas Pacific, has come in contact with these facts in regard to present Indian excitement along this line of road and in the counties of Sheridan, Decatur and Norton. The Indians have been crossing the line in bands more or less for the last ten days. Twenty miles northeast of Wallace they ambushed Col. Lewis' command of cavalry and the colonel killed, 4 men wounded. Sunday and Monday last, 20 to 30 miles north of this, Indians attacked the settlements; killed 17 settlers and many more missing, five women and girls ravished. In many houses everything was destroyed and many families made destitute. One young man killed that lived in Buffalo, helped to bury him at 6 p.m. Aid is being sent them to-night, one surgeon escorted by 15 citizens to the relief of the settlers on the North Fork of Solomon and the settlements north of there. I have only given you the outside lines. It is an Indian border war and the soldiers in field are not sufficient to subdue it. They are very slow in their movements giving the Indians all the time they want to commit their hellish deeds. Prompt action on your part to send all the assistance you can, is very much needed and desired. I will remain here a few days and will give you further details. I live in Salinak, remember.

O. P. HAMILTON."

(Lieut. Col. W. H. Lewis, 19th Inf., died September 28, 1878, result of wounds received September 27, in action with Cheyennes at Punished Woman's Fork, Kan.—Heitman's U.S.A. Reg., vol. 1, p. 631.)

"Governor Anthony, Topeka, Kan., Dear Sir: I wrote you last night of the Indian news. I have nothing to retract but more to add and I very much regret that this great commonwealth which you have the honor to govern could not have the power to protect its citizens from these hordes of savage murderers that have marched through western Kansas with perfect impunity. It is a broad assertion, yet true. They have done it and taken their own time to do it. What I communicate to you are facts that I have learned from reliable sources and of which any amount of evidence can be obtained. The Indians commenced their raid over two weeks ago south of Fort Dodge. 150 United States soldiers and 52 cow men under Dr. Davis, 30 miles south of Dodge, fought the Indians from 11 a.m. until sundown but not a man killed on either side. The commanding officer would not be advised how to fight them and withdrew, after which the Indians had their own way and before they crossed the Arkansas river killed seventeen men. Troops have been along the line of the Kansas Pacific but the Indians have come right along, crossed over where and when they pleased. Twenty-five or thirty miles northeast of Wallace, the troops came up with the Indians, lying in ambush, and had they ever shot the troops, it would have been another Custer massacre. Col. Lewis was killed and four soldiers wounded. The troops cut their way out and returned to Wallace. The Indians then got over to the South Fork of the Solomon, twenty-four miles north and seven miles west of here, when they commenced their horrid work and extended it to the Sappa, a tributary of the Republican, and how much farther not known here as yet. Seventeen bodies found up to last night. We buried one here last evening. It was a sad sight to see the remains of this young man as he was brought home to a father and mother, brothers and sisters, when only a few days ago he left home with no thought of his life being so short. This is nothing to compare to the misery of the widows and orphans made in a few short hours, say nothing of the property destroyed. Worst of all is the outrages committed upon women and two little girls. To know these facts have been committed will convey to your Excellency all the horrors these savages are capable of committing. From the beginning it has been treated by this military department as a farce. The operations of the troops have been tardy and noneffective, and virtually amount to nothing, so far. The final result is in the future. When General Pope or any other United States officer or any civil officer of state or intelligent citizen conveys to your excellency other than the facts in substance as above stated, they are either fit subjects for the insane asylum or deliberate falsifiers. The idea that General Pope saying that not a hostile Indian in the state of Kansas, can not be condemned too low by the people of western Kansas. I am very sorry to say you're censured very much throughout the west as it is not known whether you manifest any interest in behalf of the frontier. And be assured, if these massacres are repeated there will be a general uprising of the people to protect themselves and they will do it too, notwithstanding General Pope and his army. Small bands are crossing now every day going north and the people have no arms and protection or no encouragement from any source. I will remain here a week yet. Have fifty emmigrants to settle when things quiet down.

Yours truly, O. P. HAMILTON."

"Salina, Kan., October 3, 1878.

"Hon. Geo. T. Anthony, Governor, Topeka, Kan., Sir: I telegraphed to you this morning as follows: Special agent reports to me this morning from Buffalo station that the Indians have killed seventeen persons twenty to forty miles north of that place and a good many more are missing. That the Indians are crossing the railroad every night in small bands and great excitement prevails among the settlers. Many new settlers are in that district and forty-four from Iowa went to Buffalo last night, but no doubt will return immediately. There are supposed to be about 150 cavalry and ten companies infantry in wagons. My informant is a man of experience and good judgment. You are doubtless aware that very many families from the states north and east of us immigrated to the western belt of that state within the last six or eight months and it would seem that the very inadequate protection afforded by the United States leaves these poor but bold pioneers to the mercy of the savages, who are now revelling in their innocent blood. Only about two weeks ago a colony from Indiana with almost an entire freight train of goods went west on the Kansas Pacific railway to settle in Norton county and last night there were forty-four Hollanders from Iowa on the train, bound for Gove county. Very respectfully,

S. J. GILLMORE,
Land Commissioner."

The Indians were pursued and captured in Nebraska. Following is an extract from correspondence of Governor Anthony, dated November 11, 1878, to War Department, demanding surrender of Cheyenne chiefs to state of Kansas.

"On mature reflection, and with reference to the demands of law and justice, I feel it an imperative duty to call upon you for a surrender to the proper officers of the civil court of Kansas, for trial and punishment under its laws, the principal chiefs, "Dull Knife," "Old Crow," "Hog," "Little Wolfe," and others, whose identity can be established as participants in the crimes of murder and woman ravishing. I believe there is a precedent for this demand, in the surrender of the civil courts of Texas of "Satanta," and one other chief, in the year 1872. But if there is no precedent, public necessity and simple justice would, I believe, be ample justification for this demand."

Extract from correspondence of War Department, dated November and December, 1878, being memoranda for Secretary of War, signed W.T.S.:

"Governor Anthony of Kansas in person asks for more troops to increase the security of property in south and western Kansas. Governor Anthony says that squads of Indians from Indian Territory come into Kansas and make the settlers feel insecure. The military authorities make no reports to this effect, and I believe the Indian Bureau contends that all the Indians are kept on their reservation. The Northern Cheyennes who escaped from the reservation at Reno last summer, and were captured on the Upper Niobrara, are now prisoners and can be held so if necessary. Existing orders are to surrender the murderers of the settlers on Sappa creek to the civil authorities and the remainder to Reno."

"Headquarters, Department of the Missouri.
Fort Leavenworth, Kan., December 31, 1878.

"Hon. Geo. T. Anthony, Governor of Kansas, Topeka, Kan., Governor: I have the honor to inform you that I have received orders from the War Department to turn over to the civil authorities of Kansas, such of the Cheyenne prisoners en route to this place as can be identified as the criminals who committed murders or other crimes during the raid of the Indians through Kansas in September last. As it is desirable not to keep these Indians here longer than necessary, I have to request that such persons as may be needed for the identification of the criminals be sent to meet the Indians on their arrival here. I can not tell yet exactly when they will reach here, but I will notify you by telegraph as long as possible in advance — perhaps a week.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
JNO. POPE, *Bvt. Maj. Gen. U.S.A. Com'g."*

The Cheyenne prisoners arrived at Fort Leavenworth, February 1879, and on Feb. 15 were taken in irons to Dodge City for trial.

"Dodge City, Kan., February 20, 1879.

"P. S. Noble, Esqu., Topeka, Kans., Friend Noble: I am in receipt of your letter of this morning and I am sorry I was so dilatory in sending back the handcuffs and leg irons. However, I have expressed them to your address to-day and hope you will receive them all right. The Indians are all well and in good spirits but want their squaws and papooses, which I am in hopes they may get. I am, very respectfully,

W. B. Masterson,
Sheriff, Ford County."

A preliminary trial was held at Dodge City, June 24, when a change of venue was granted, and the prisoners were taken to Lawrence where an examination was held by a senatorial committee, August 12, 1879. The particulars of the examination were not made public. The next examination was held in Indian Territory, by the commission. The Lawrence *Standard,* October 16, 1879, stated that the Cheyennes had been liberated. The case of the State of Kansas vs. Wild Hog et al. had been called and disposed of for want of evidence and absence of witnesses. Judge N. T. Stephens refused to continue the case aud turned the Indians over to Indian Agent Miles, who was present and ready to receive them, and conduct them later to their reserve.

The names of the seven Indian prisoners brought back to Kansas appear in the report of the Adjutant General for 1879-80 as Wild Hog, Old Crow, Big Head, Left Hand Blacksmith, Porcupine and Nose Walker. In newspaper accounts the names Frizzly or Frizzle Head and Old Man are used instead of Big Head and Nose Walker.

Under act of legislature, senate joint resolution No. 1, approved March 7, 1879, a commission was appointed to examine and audit claims resulting from this raid. There were one hundred and sixteen claims presented, twenty-six of which were rejected, the claims allowed amounting to $101,766.83. The commission numbered the killed at thirty-two, but later investigation fixed the loss, including deaths from wounds, at forty-two.

From the report of the commission and testimony of the settlers, the following list of names has been obtained, the first six being from counties on the south border: Reuben Briston, Fred Clark, Frank T. Dow, John Evans, all of Salt Fork, Comanche County.

George Simmons (colored), Barber of Comanche County.

Washington O'Connor, Meade county.

From counties in the northwest:

Moses F. Abernathy, Marcellus Felt, Frederick Hemper, John C. Hudson, E. O. Humphrey, John Humphrey, John Irwin, William Laing, sr., William Laing, jr., Freeman Laing, John C. Laing, L. T. Lull, Edward Miskelley, James G. Smith,—Smith (son), George F. Walters, Ferdinand Westphalen, Thomas Westphalen, John Wright, John Young, all of Decatur county.

George H. Abbott, Rev. George Fennberg, Alexander Foster, Hynek Janosek, Peter Janosek, Arnold Kubitz, W. J. Marshall, Henry Shidler, Frank Sochor, Rudolph Springer, Antone Stenner, all of Rawlins county.

Unknown dead, one in Clark county and four in Barber county.

The counties raided were Barber, Comanche, Clark, Decatur, Ford, Foote (now Gray), Gove, Hodgeman, Meade, Rawlins, and Sheridan counties.

The heaviest property loss to the individual was that of cattlemen in Ford and Gove counties, the three highest claims being allowed to Evans, Hunter & Evans of Ford county, $14,019, and to J. L. Driskill & Sons, Ford county, $13,700."

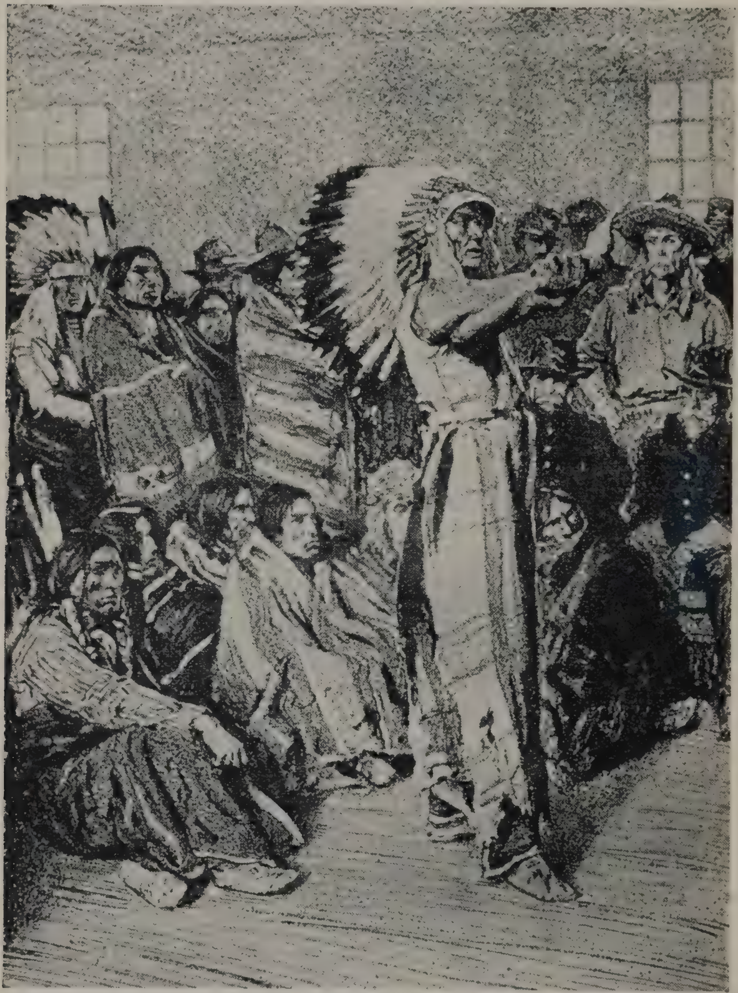
Chapter XIX

Indian Raid as Experienced by Our Family and Others

IN chapter nineteen we still have an Indian raid, which seems to have ended the raids in the community described by the author. The chapter has a great deal of human nature in it. Certainly Gearheart was not a Great Heart. There have always been swash bucklers. Shakespear coined one of them named Falstaff. There were courageous youth with resourcefulness of born and bred experienced pioneers, and the tri-state cornered area had them in crisis.

Speak of Kentucky as the dark and bloody ground! This area was bloody ground in Indian battle although not dark when prairie fires raced and mass residence burning lightened up the scenes of barbarian incendiarism. However, the pioneers were not vengeful, they were worthy Christians. Washington, and the great men sent there, came in for something more than mild criticism and we believe highly flavored with justice.

Indian claims at Washington were like Dicken's Chancery as portrayed in Jarndyce vs Jarndyce, I call attention to the closing paragraphs of the chapter wherein the author who might as a pessimist have found serious fault with conditions and with the inaction of our Government at Washington, but instead of that he says: "It has ever been thus, in settlement of America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lives were sacrificed, hardships and privations were endured, that America might be won for the progress and betterment of mankind. The building of America, its cost in life, sacrifice and treasure, should be a part of the education of every boy and girl, in such a manner as to make a lasting impression on them, and, knowing and feeling the tremendous cost and sacrifices deep down in their hearts, "America the Beautiful" will be loved by them for what it cost and stands for, when responsibility for its guidance and protection becomes theirs."



Dull Knife, fierce warrior who led the Indian raid of 1878 with all its atrocities known in Indian warfare.

Indian Raid of September 30, 1878.

OUR father had gone to Omaha and other points east and was away when, following repeated reports of Indians on the warpath, the raid actually occurred on the Beaver Valley. About eight P.M. September 30th, 1878 S. F. McDonald, living about four miles east of us, stopped on his way home from West Field—now Oberlin, Kansas—and told us that the Indians were on the Sappa west of Oberlin, that while he was there a man and his two sons whom they had killed was brought into Oberlin. He also stated that no one knew which direction they would go, north, northeast, or northwest, their general direction being northwest. He also informed us he had warned the settlers near us as he came and they were planning to gather for mutual protection at the Ed Pharas dugout about one quarter mile east of us and advised us to go there, and he would tell the settlers on the road home of the place of meeting. When we arrived at the dugout several families were there and still others came. In all, as I recall, around a dozen families. The women and children went into the dugout and the men and larger boys remained outside. We had not been there long when some one suggested that the folks up the creek should be warned. W. A. Minniear, our close neighbor, offered to go for one if he had a horse. W. T. Henton had a badly sprained ankle and was in no condition to make the ride but offered his horse "Bill," the horse that I have previously mentioned, and Minniear accepted. No one, after asking several, cared to go, so I offered to go with him. Mr. Minniear said, "Get your horse and let's get going." We each had a revolver, I an old army cap and ball and Minniear had Mr. Henton's Smith and Wesson. I have often thought since that, armed as we were, we were indeed fortunate that on the trip we saw no Indians. We left about 9 P.M. and went up the creek about ten miles, digressing on our course, each to warn a family, and then meeting again at some designated place ahead. One incident I will especially mention. When we arrived at Bass Gearheart's house and informed him of the conditions and plans, he became very much excited and wondered what he could do. Said he had loaned his wagon, had no conveyance, and was really disturbed and desired to be off to the dugout at once. I told him we would stop at Jesse Ashton's and have him come by and get them. Before we arrived at Mr. Ashton's home, Gearheart was racing on his horse after us. And was he excited? Mr. Ashton took them down. We went on our way, and near where Cedar Bluffs now is, we secured men to go on up the creek and we returned home. Long before we arrived we could see the distant glow of an apparent campfire, which grew more distinct until we rode into the little company of men around it. Not a guard placed to notify of the approach of Indians and a campfire to pilot them to the place. It made me just plain mad. Boy though I was, I "read the riot act" to those men, telling them that they all assembled for the protection of each other and their families and then, acting like kids in judgment, made a campfire to guide the Indians to them. Bass Gearheart then made the mistake of saying that he did not believe there was an Indian in the territory. It was then I told him of his fear, his rush to Ashton's, his shaky condition and in a company of men he was posing as a 'hero.' I suggested that the fire be put out at once — that guards be placed at least one fourth mile distant, around the camp, and as Gearheart was so brave and sure there were no Indians that he be placed at farthest outpost. It was really amusing to hear him say he was not well, really he was sick and we should not depend on him, for he was feeling worse all the time. The campfire was put out, guards placed, and in the morning scouts went out and on their return, as there was no trace of Indians, we returned to our homes.

That day, October 1—we received word of the folks killed and of depredations on the Beaver. The names of those killed and depredations are set forth in our first article from Kansas History. That night the neighborhood gathered at the home of J. E. Dolph, a large sod house, and guards were placed but still no Indians. The word received from scouts up the creek was that the Indians had gone northwest and were on the Republican with the soldiers in pursuit, with orders to bring them back or kill them. Then the soldiers got busy and put the Indians on the run. Their capture is told in the Kansas History, and their disposition. Again word came a new band of Indians was coming and we, with many others, went to Wilsonville, some congregating at the Alonzo Plum home and others at the Mr. Stone home. Again scouts were sent up and on their return no Indians were reported so we went home. We were scarcely home when a report was brought to the Beaver that over a thousand Indians had gone into camp on the Sappa Creek south of us and this was no scare for the scout had seen their rifles glisten in the sunlight. The entire community left that night and drove to Beaver City where a large corral was made of the wagons and the folks camped inside the enclosure. Again scouts were sent out and brought back word that the thousand Indians were a herd of Texas cattle and the guns glistening in the sunlight were no doubt the long horns of the cattle. We all went home and thus ended the Indian scares.

Our family being acquainted with the Fredrick Hemper, Anton Stenner and Abbott families, father and W. A. Minniear went up the creek to see if they could be of any assistance. They found the Stenner family nearly destitute and Mrs. Stenner, who had seen her husband shot down near the house, almost distracted. They brought Mrs. Stenner and eight children to our home and mother cared for them about a week, then they moved to the Pharas dugout, lived there for a time, and later moved near Indianola.

Father, after locating the Stenner family, again went up the creek and found a Bohemian woman, Mrs. Janocek, and several children, seemingly without a home wandering on the prairie. She pointed to her mouth and to the children's mouths and made signs of hunger. Father pointed to the wagon, they got in, and he gave them lunches from his "grub box" and then pointed down the creek; she bowed her head. Father brought them home and mother cared for them several days and she seemed so grateful. After they were fed and had a night's rest, she tried in sign language to tell us what had happened—she would point and say boom! boom! Afterwards we learned her husband, his brother and her father had been shot down in her presence. Again father went to that neighborhood to locate a Bohemian who could talk English. He contacted one, and this young man came down and took them home. We knew Pat Rathburn and

Frederick Hemper well. Just before the raid, Hemper had his mules stolen and they were hunting them. When they met a few Indians who seemed so friendly, Pat was suspicious and in leaving he quickly turned around. This act saved his life for the Indians immediately shot at him and the bullet intended for him only grazed his side. The other shot, fired into the back of Mr. Hemper, killed him instantly. Pat fought them off for several hours and finally they left, he escaping at nightfall. For many years Pat wore his revolver and belt of cartridges saying he would carry it as long as he lived as it had saved his life. Many years after this event and after Pat had passed away I met his son and told him of what Pat had said about carrying his revolver, and the son said he hung it up as a relic long before he had died.

When George H. Abbott, or Harry Abbott, as we knew him best, was killed by the Indians—it was in the early morning—he had ridden out to drive in the horses to obtain a new mount for the day. The Indians, a number of them, had gotten between him and home and were shooting at him. The father, who had gone to the spring after water, heard the shooting and was looking at the chase when an Indian shot at him. He said he dodged back and forth to the sod house, got his gun and shot at the nearest Indian, who leaned forward on his horse but he was not sure that he hit him as he may only have leaned forward for better protection. In the meantime Harry was killed. The Abbott home was the farthest west the Indians were, where Atwood is now located, and from there east to a few miles west of Herndon. Some four or five weeks after the raid the Abbott cowboys, among whom was Harry's brother Arthur, were riding the canyons and saw what they thought to be a black skunk raising its body back of a bank. They took a shot at it and rode in that direction. Imagine their surprise when the black skunk proved to be the head of an Indian and a gun pointing at them. They quickly withdrew and one of them went around to come up to him from the rear. Before he got there the Indian raised his head a little too high and a bullet entered his forehead. He had been wounded in the leg and evidently left behind by the roving band. His gun proved to be a dark piece of wood. After telling us of this circumstance, the old gentleman said happily, "Score one for Harry."

The killing of men by the Indians, bad as it was, could perhaps be condoned, but their brutal and fiendish treatment of women and girls reaching maturity marked them for the savage brutes they were and they should have been exterminated without mercy or sympathy. It seems that the killing of men was motivated by the desire to steal horses and thus avoid the trouble the men could give them, and also to thus protect themselves in carrying out their inhuman, fiendish, and brutal treatment of the women. The stories told by some of them are too horrid to record and cannot be forgotten or forgiven.

Barnett E. Ashton, one of our neighbors, was working with a threshing machine, and saved his life by lying in the creek under a bank part of the time. Without a gun to help him, he was an eye-witness to this brutality, as was also Pat Rathburn, who had run out of ammunition and thus was helpless.

Before leaving the Beaver the Indians set fire to a great deal of the hay, stacked grain and straw—also to the threshing machine with which Mr. Ashton was employed. No doubt the object was that the men left would be kept busy with the fire in protecting their homes and would have no time to follow them. The Indians thus laid the foundation for the most terrific and destructive prairie fire ever known or experienced on the Beaver Valley and it is known as the Indian Fire.

Prairie fires were numerous in the early days, and the burning off of the grass in fall or winter that was needed for feed was almost a calamity to the cattlemen and early settlers on the streams. To protect themselves and their ranges, early in the fall the settlers with their teams would plow what were termed 'Fire Guards.' They would start at the creek and plow three or four furrows and other teams about 100 to 150 feet from them would do likewise and follow the upland to the crest of the divide, then around the head of the canyons, then back to the creek, then when grass was dry, burn it all off between the furrows. Thus protecting the range for several settlers. Other settlers did likewise and the cattlemen followed the same plan to protect their ranges. If a fire was seen in the distance day or night, the settlers turned out with a barrel or barrels of water in their wagons, to wet gunny sacks, old pieces of carpet, old clothes, to follow the lines of the fire and beat it out. The writer has gone long distances, ten to twenty miles, as well as near home, and helped whip out many fires. It was hot, smoky work.

Far and above all known fires, the most terrific and the most destructive was the Indian Fire of early October, 1878. As previously stated, the fire was set by the Cheyenne Indians on their raid, and as the weather was calm did not spread over much territory, until a very strong wind blew from the west just enough northeast to bring the fire down the valley. As previously stated, 1878 was a wet year, all vegetation grew luxuriantly and there was a heavy growth of weeds and tickle grass in the bottom corn fields. The wheat and hay were in stack. Early frosts had killed all vegetation, fire guards were not yet burned out, and the fire was coming down the valley ten to fifteen miles an hour. The heat was so intense and the smoke so suffocating that, when the fire was still over a mile distant, we were forced to go into our dugout for protection. We knew for several hours the fire was coming, we could see the great billows of smoke rising skyward, but in that strong wind we were powerless to burn a guard or prevent its coming. We carried water and wet the exposed logs of our dugout and stable. When the main fire and heat had passed, we came out and the stable was burning and so was the log end of the dugout. The stable was beyond help but we soon made the house or dugout safe.

I have previously mentioned herding about 150 cattle this summer. The yard, or bed ground, was in a bend of the creek about 300 yards from the house. Near this yard, we had a rick of rye, perhaps 30 loads, and untouched by the fire. The reason was that in driving the cattle from their feeding range to the yard, they made trails and wore the grass off so that there was little to burn. The creek was close so father and my brother Will and I rushed down there and carried water from the creek to put out any fire that might reach the stack. This occurred afterwards as dry chips from the cattle would catch fire and then the wind start them rolling. Blazes started several times but we saved the stack. All the hay, wheat in stack and a few straw stacks were burned on the valley five or six miles east and west of us as I recall. The fire ran through the corn fields, burning many, only leaving a black ruin. In others, streaks through them. Most of the settlers lived in sod houses or dugouts; none of these were burned. Joe Murphy, about four miles west of us, had just moved into his new log house, complete with floors and a very nice home. It and all contents were destroyed—Mrs. Murphy and daughter saving their lives in the cave close by.

Joe Dolph's log house and all contents were burned, but no loss of life. He had a small bunch of cattle, about 27 as I recall, that ran ahead of the fire until suffocated and burned to death.

Joe Johnson, another close neighbor, had a broom corn shed filled with his drying broom corn crop, near his log house, and it, log house and all contents burned, his family saving their lives in the creek, it being near the house. Scarcely a settler went through without loss. The fire was so intensely hot that it killed nearly all the trees—very few remaining alive along the borders of the creek. The fire worked untold hardships on the settlers and readjustments had to be made. Some left for the winter, others disposed of stock, and others took their stock to the Republican Valley. One good thing about the mighty wind — it blew so hard that when and wherever the fire reached the short buffalo grass on top of the divide the wind blew it out. Thus the Republican Valley and its tributary canyons south were spared its ravages.

We moved our cattle and a couple of horses to the Clark and Mitchell ranch on the south side of the river between Indianola and Bartley and had good range for them. My brother Will was in charge. Clark and Mitchel had 100 cattle and we around 20. We had heavy snows that winter and in order for the cattle to graze, the men made so-called snow plows, V-shaped sleds, pulled by horses and put in their days driving up and down the canyons. The sun would melt the little snow left and the cattle got through the winter but pretty thin in flesh. Others lost a large part of their stock that winter through the severity of the season and lack of feed. The settlers' losses from fire and severe winter were not so big in dollars but the property was very precious to them.

In our case it caused us to live in the dugout another year and defer the sod house we had planned and hoped to build. As the fire was set by the Indians and so known and proven, Senator Plum, at that time senator from Kansas, knowing that the U. S. government was holding large sums of money belonging to the Indians, advised the settlers to make itemized lists of their losses and prove their claims by two witnesses. This was done in accordance with his instructions and under his directions, he meeting those settlers damaged in Oberlin. When the claims were made out, he personally took them to Washington and filed them with the "Court of Claims." In reading the record copied from the Kansas records, I observed the large claims paid cattlemen in southern and central Kansas. None of the Beaver or Sappa claims were ever paid to my knowledge and their losses were indeed heavy for them to bear. That you may fully understand governmental delay where the little fellow is concerned, and results, remember the raid was in September, 1878, with claims filed in the spring of 1879 and at some expense to each settler, $5 each as I remember the charge. A sizeable sum for the settlers at that time. Then more or less correspondence regarding them over the years. I will now follow with a copy of a letter I wrote Senator John M. Thurston 22 years later, and replies, which apparently was and is the final disposition of the losses suffered by the settlers, which in some cases caused them to part with their claims. We have never heard from the Department of Claims since. No doubt the court and attorney have all passed away, as have the original settlers, and the Indians involved have gone to the "Happy Hunting Ground" and their children and children's children are still feted and dined by our munificent government. After all the facts are, as heretofore stated, that it took 22 years for the wheels of our government to turn sufficiently to determine that the Indians were not committing their heinous depredations just for fun but that they were "not in amity" – which, being literally interpreted, means they were just plain mad and on the so-called "Warpath."

Now follow copies of final correspondence and the closing of a final epoch in Indian warfare and their depredations.

Danbury, Nebr.
Jan. 2, 1900.

Hon. John M. Thurston,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

In 1878 the Cheyenne Indians committed depredation on my father's property, whose claim was duly filed no. 6444. This matter was dormant so long that in 1896 the Hon. W. E. Andrews looked the matter up and the letter he rec'd from the court of claims, I herewith enclose for your information. I would be much pleased if you will kindly look this up and ascertain what if anything is lacking. This is a just claim of hard earned dollars and would be a God-send to Father in his declining years. Trusting to hear from you soon.

I remain Yours resp.
F. G. Stilgebouer

Court of Claims, Clerk's Office

Washington, April 6, 1896

Hon. W. E. Andrews,
House of Representatives U. S.,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 14th ultimo, enclosing a letter of the commissioner of Indian Affairs in regard to the Indian depredation claim of S. W. Stilgebouer, No. 6444.

In reply I have to state that in said case there have been filed the papers originally filed in the Interior Department, depositions of claimant et al., and brief for claimant. The case is now apparently awaiting the filing a brief by the attorneys for the defendant before being submitted to the Court for decision.

The letter of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs is herewith returned.

Respectfully, John Randolph
Ass't Clerk, Court of Claims

Wm. T. S. Curtis
Attorney and Counsellor At Law,
1417 G Street, N.W.,

Washington, D.C., January 15, 1900.

John Randolph, Esq.,
Assistant Clerk, Court of Claims,
City.

Dear Sir:—

I have your communication of the 15th instant, in which you state that Senator Thurston has made inquiries concerning the Indian Depredation case of S. W. Stilgebouer on account of depredation committed by the Northern Cheyenne Indians in the fall of 1878. I am attorney of record in the case, and some years ago filed on behalf of my client brief and request for findings of fact together with other cases involved in the same raid. About two years ago the Court heard argument by myself and other counsel in a test case, growing out of the aforesaid raid, to determine the question whether or not the Indians at this time were in "amity." The decision of the Court was adverse to the claimants, in which it was held that at this time the Indians were hostile and consequently under the Jurisdictional Act, the petition should be dismissed.

The case was taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, where it is now pending. In the meantime the case of Stilgebouer by consent remains upon the docket, and should the decision in the test case be favorable to the claimant, I will then do all I can to expedite the case and such others as may be in my hands involving the same question. I hope you will take occasion to so advise Senator Thurston of the situation.

Yours very truly,
Wm. T. S. Curtis

After reading the Kansas History story of the raid, with the evidence of so many eye-witnesses of the facts as therein stated and the endeavor of those situated in the raiding territory to secure guns and ammunition with which to defend themselves, and when in connection with these facts the general in charge of the department, General Pope said, "There was not an Indian within a hundred miles of them," one wonders where General Pope got his information, for he well knew of the many raids in the recent past. I think the Generals were greatly handicapped by authorities in Washington. The Kansas history sets forth the fact that the chiefs responsible for the raid were arrested and brought back for trial as per request of the government of Kansas. The Kansas history sets forth the manner in which they were freed, this being by a change of location of their trial to so distant a place that no witness could afford to attend. One writer says they were rightly freed. To this statement we feel that we rightly disagree. To some extent, the Indian was made a political football and was to be pitied, but to say they, after what they did, were rightly freed, is going too far. Yet the political committee made no other course possible in the pretended offer of a trial so far from the scene of their inhuman acts. I am not surprised, when soldiers were sent in pursuit, that they did not catch up with them, or if and when they did, that they withdrew when a fight was imminent, as they no doubt had orders to bring them back peaceably. Such was the solicitude for the wards of the Government at Washington that the Indian must not be harmed. You only need read Custer's "Life on the Plains" to draw this conclusion. It also clears up in my mind what Buffalo hunters and cowboys on the frontier said to me, or in conversation in my presence in the early days, and that was, "That the Indians had more fear of a few cowboys, or Buffalo hunters, than a regiment of soldiers." The reason of the fear was, the cowboys and the Buffalo hunters shot without orders, straight, and secured results. The Indians respected their bravery and ability to shoot. The soldiers could not or would not disobey orders. None knew this better than the plains Indian. I have talked with a number of the soldiers, in the early days. One company camped on our land several days in 1876, Lieutenant Whitman being a guest of my parents during that time and a very fine gentleman. I recall Will and visited their camp one evening and, naturally, our conversation was concerning the possibility of the Indians coming. A young Irish soldier said to me, "Sonny, if the government would only give us the right to shoot, we would soon stop the "dorn" Indians and make

"Good Indians" of them." (Good Indians were dead Indians in the parlance of the time.) In the course of the conversation it was made clear to me that the Indians were not afraid of and need not fear the soldiers, the reason being they had orders that soldiers as such must obey. The same fall a regiment camped on an adjoining farm and, in visiting with them, we learned they hoped their officers had such orders that when they met up with the Indians they were hunting, they could at least protect themselves. This was a cavalry regiment with full supply train accompanying. This was the last soldiery we saw in our community and it was two years prior to the Indian Raid of 1878 with which you are now familiar. General Custer, in the "Life on the Plains" says that it was stated by the Indian commissioner at Washington, "That it seemed to be the desire of the soldiers and settlers to stir up the hatred and enmity of the Indians and provoke a fight." General Custer further stated that "nothing could be further from the facts as both soldier and settler had all to lose and nothing to gain by so doing."

Following the Raid of 1878 we were free from Indian raids and Indian scares, which was indeed pleasing to all the settlers, contrary to the opinion of the Washington Indian commissioner.

It has ever been thus, in settlement of America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lives were sacrificed, hardships and privations were endured, that America might be won for the progress and betterment of mankind. The building of America, its cost in life, sacrifice and treasure, should be a part of the education of every boy and girl, in such a manner as to make a lasting impression on them and, knowing and feeling the tremendous cost and sacrifices deep down in their hearts, "America the Beautiful" will be loved by them for what it cost and stands for, when the responsibility for its guidance and protection becomes theirs.

Chapter XX

Horse Thieves and Sod House

IT WOULD seem that the misfortune of famine, pestilence and drought would be sufficient for the hardy pioneers. But it seems that there is, was and probably always will be those among neighbors, near or distant, that they too take their toll from their fellow men, and so in the area discussed in this chapter they had equine lifters. The most valuable of all the farmers chattels, and the most easy ones to steal and get away, it is no reflection upon the communities that organized and carried into tragic effect the depredations of the horse thieves. The western counties seem to have done their full duty, following perhaps the doctrine of the old dispensation of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and if the horse was not brought for the horse taken there was a well deserved suspension from the old cottonwood tree.

* * *

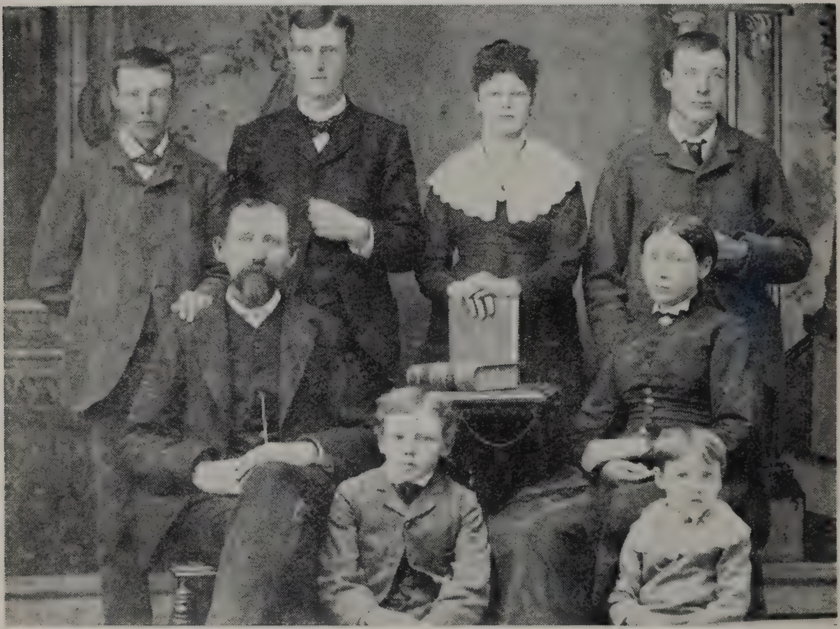
There had been frequent loss of horses and mules through theft on the Beaver from the first spring we came — Boyers losing the bay team previously mentioned — and other losses followed, until the settlers organized for mutual protection. Two organizations were made — one at Cedar Bluffs, Kansas and the other covered our community. The object was two-fold. First, to all respond when called by trying to track down the thieves and secure the return of the horses and, failing in this, the other was to all contribute and replace a team to the settler. It was a terrible thing to lose the means of making a living in this manner, and to be unable to replace the loss. An old gentleman by name of Hammond drove from the east with a very choice team and was scarcely established when his team was stolen. Hemper's mules were stolen, and several other teams, thus the two organizations came into being for mutual protection and assistance.

Up the creek not far from where Herndon is now located lived a family by name of Harvey, and Mr. Harvey frequently made trips down to the John Robinson home near where Marion is now located, and would buy a load of corn or part of a load and return home. It was observed that soon after these trips a team would be stolen. I have never believed that Robinson had anything to do with it, for he was a good generous neighbor and friend, but I do believe that Mr. Harvey was just smooth enough in the course of their conversation about new settlers to find out who were newcomers and about their motive power. More than a suspicion that Harvey was connected with a gang of horse thieves was substantiated when a German living in his neighborhood lost a good team and a few days later, Mrs. Harvey was seen by another lady leading the team to the creek to water. Search was made and the team recovered in a plum thicket where it was hid on Government land. The organization up the creek knew Harvey had made a trip down the valley, being seen by one of their number. This was early spring of 1879. As I do not know the facts in the prelude, I can only record the results. Mr. Harvey was returning home, leaving the Robinson place in the morning, and had driven about four miles southwest up the creek crossing into Kansas and had just driven up out of a canyon when he was riddled with bullets and his horses killed. His body was found soon after noon by a man on horseback and the immediate community notified, who cared for it and notified his family. The next day a homesteader minister preached the funeral and a neighbor of our attending reported that, on the road to the cemetery, two greyhounds owned by the reverend gentleman chased a jack rabbit and that Mrs. Harvey enjoyed the chase so much she clapped her hands and hallowed encouragement to the dogs. It appeared she was not saddened by his demise and that she was perhaps relieved. It was whispered around that the western organization had a meeting and when the killing of Harvey was proposed some of them objected and withdrew from further deliberation. It was generally believed that some members of that organization did the job. No proof was ever sought or forthcoming and this tragedy stopped the stealing. Pretty tough and lawless but it was also pretty tough to lose the means of earning a living. Also, remember this was early in the west and the west literally hated a cattle or horse thief and they knew it when they took a chance. A short time after this, Robinson received a letter with a gallows and a man hanging, with the notation, "leave soon." He showed it to a near neighbor, then grew nervous and frightened and left with his family, going to Missouri and later trading his 160 to David W. Bush for the latter's Missouri farm. The Robinsons were kind and helpful in sickness and I feel were victims of their kindness to Mr. Harvey who at one time lived as a near neighbor to the Robinsons.

The year 1879 was a year of good crops and feed for stock. We farmed more than usual that year. I made a hand, with my brother Will. All prairie hay was in stack at proper time in the fall, corn ripening and plans being laid for the building of our year-deferred sod house. We had mowed some long slough grass on the Joe Dolph claim for the purpose of covering a shed for our cattle. Will and I had hauled it and were returning with the last load of hay when we upset. In the mishap, both of my arms were broken, wrist displaced and I was very bady bruised on my mouth and face. This was on the 9th of September, 1879. Fortunately a Doctor Pollock had homesteaded near us and that evening about four hours after the accident he set my arms. A wooden bucket was dismantled and its staves used for splints, mother tearing in strips a bed sheet for bandages. This was on a Friday evening and my arms pained so severely I could get no rest or sleep and my hands were apparently so badly swollen, that circulation practically stopped. Dr. Pollock was called in Sunday and he removed the bandages; the relief was so instant that mother told me later I fell asleep while he rebandaged them.

Father and mother had indeed been good neighbors in health, sickness and death, and now they were to have unsolicited returns for their kindness and ministrations. We were still living in the dugout with no screen door. September 9th, the peak of fly time and hot weather, I lying in bed, face badly bruised and badly swollen, arms bandaged and helpless to help myself in any way. The neighbors for several miles distant up and down the valley planned, and carried out the plans, that there would be a woman with me every day and a man every night and this was done faithfully and well until I was out of bed, it being about six weeks. In the years afterward, I was privileged to return the kindness shown and helpfulness given to many of those good people, of whom all, so far as I now know, have been laid away. "But to live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

Picture of Solomon W. Stilgebouer family taken in the fall of 1886. We lived in the sod house two years after the sod house picture on the following page was taken. The family were all at home except William J. who was living on his homestead, and Ella M., who was married.



Reading from right to left, standing: William J., Ella M., Forster G., and Solomon H. *Seated*: Mother, Elizabeth, Father Solomon W., Lulu K. and Edward B.

Sod House.

That fall our sod house was built in the same manner as our schoolhouse and of the same material. Walls three feet thick and no projecting roof on the sides. It was built in form of an

"L." Three rooms the long way and two rooms in the "L." The only floor was in the kitchen, and the living room was carpeted with rags sewn by mother. The rest of the floors were as nature made them, dirt. In order to stretch the carpet, pegs were driven next to the wall in the dirt floor, hay put on the floor and carpet edges nailed fast to the pegs. It was soft and fine and the object of the hay under the carpet was that it kept the dust from raising.

I took no part in the building as my arms would not permit, but previously and subsequently I had helped build many sod houses. The neighbors, as was usual in the building of homes, came, donating a day's work and the house was soon up. It was as happy a change in homes as the recent change in schoolhouses spoken of. We lived in this home nine years, when father built a frame house near it. I have an enlarged picture of the sod house hanging in my office in our bank and as I look up to it, I am ever reminded of the splendid home our parents made for us and the happy times we children had with them and with each

Sod House, the home of Solomon W. Stilgebouer and family, built in the fall of 1879 and occupied by the family until Dec., 1888. A monument to Pioneers as well as home.

other in that home. It was not just a place to eat and sleep, say good-night and good-morning, but a home in the full sense and meaning of the word and I love the old sod house for what it represents — father, mother, brothers, sisters, home.

We had six months of school that fall and winter 1878-9 in our new schoolhouse. M. H. Cavanaugh, formerly a teacher in Iowa before coming to homestead, was our teacher and we had quite a large school. We surely enjoyed the new conditions and with Mr. Cavanaugh as teacher and friend, we made great progress. Now that we had a good comfortable schoolhouse, a Methodist Episcopal church was organized and from that fall, 1878 we had almost regular schurch at least every two weeks until the town of Danbury started and a frame schoolhouse was built in the town. We were served largely by homesteader ministers. Sunday School, union in organization, was continuous. The Christian character-building was as important, as far-reaching and as abiding, as though we had received those lessons and instruction in the heavenspired cathedrals of the large cities, and perhaps more so.

Chapter XXI

Burlington Railroad, McCook a Division Point and History of C. B. & Q.

BURLINGTON chapter. The large and outstanding factor in transportation at the tri-state cornered area, upon which the author has lavished his industry and wealth of detail, necessary to give a fit setting to the commanding Railway System, which reaches from mountains to the Great Lakes with many branches and subdivisions. Our two greatest rivers crossed and with its friendly rival Union Pacific the trackage, rolling stock and financial standing, lead the world. Each cross Nebraska the long way, and carry for distribution more products of food per capita than any other state in the Union.

Down at Washington some years ago, there were in cloak room several members discussing the canals of the Nation. New York told of Erie mileage, tonnage and history. Michigan boasted of canal St. Marie for leading tonnage. Pennsylvania and North Carolina were heard from. There was a rather tolerant smile as they turned to a Nebraska modest representative. He quietly suggested our State as having the longest canal beginning at the Rocky Mountains and extending to the Atlantic. They laughed derisively and asked the name of our canal. The Nebraskan answered: "This is the National Alimentary Canal, you locate the terminals."

* * *

The year 1880 stands out as the year in which occurred the most useful and important event in the history of Red Willow county and southwest Nebraska — the arrival of the "Burlington Railroad," thus linking us with the outside world in furnishing us the transportation so badly needed, and so much appreciated.

It was the belief of the early settlers in selecting the Republican

Valley and tributary streams for their homes, that a railroad would soon be their portion, and in this fertile region it was not only hoped for but expected. Numerous preliminary surveys had been made over the years up the Republican and Beaver Valleys but that seemed to be the end of the matter. There were rumors of their coming as there had been, in the past years, rumors of the Indians coming, until the railroad – like the Indian – came, but unlike the Indian, it came to build and not to destroy.

On arriving at Indianola, for some reason, perhaps financial, it made that village its terminal for about a year, then in 1881 built on to Culbertson, Denver being its ultimate destination. Red Willow county was so situated as to be a favorable division point and Indianola and Culbertson vied with each other in seeking the location. The go-ahead sign was given, construction pushed with much vigor, and the Burlington reached Denver early in 1882, thus connecting Red Willow county with the Gem of the Prairie and the Golden West.

McCook.

It was early in 1882 that McCook was brought into being by the decision of the Burlington to make it a division point, and the building of shops. The location is ideal, on a table land north of the river with a gently rising upland, for business and homes for its people. McCook was indeed fortunate in getting a citizenry of energetic and forward-looking men, of both young and middle age, who invested their energies and their fortunes in its upbuilding and progress. It is a city of which not only its builders but all southwestern Nebraska and northwest Kansas may be justly proud. It was my privilege to be present in 1932 at its Golden Jubilee – the 50th year of its existence. While the city was progressing in the growth of its homes, churches and schools, its parks and its business houses, many of those who were with us when the city was young were with us no more, and more of those sturdy men have passed on in the intervening years. It is ever thus: "They began to build, but they did not finish." They laid the foundations of their city truly and well, and others, inspired by them, are now carrying on. The one thing of which McCook is and always has been justly proud is its school system, and later its Junior College which is drawing students from a wide range of counties surrounding it.

The Burlington railroad, like most individuals and cities, started from a very small beginning and its coming into southwestern Nebraska has meant so much to us that it seems but fitting and just to record some of its early History as gleaned from a small booklet entitled "An Historical Sketch of the First Ninety Years 1850-1940 of the Burlington Railroad," as compiled by R. C. Overton and by his consent. It is the writer's desire that the reader contrast the railroad and equipment of 90 years ago, or even 65 years ago, with his knowledge of the railroad and equipment of today. Through the kindness and generosity of the Superintendent of the Burlington at McCook, an engine, passenger coach and freight car of the early days were loaned us here in Benkelman for use in the Dundy county Fair parades. The writer came to Nebraska sixty-five years ago in a similar coach, but with a somewhat larger engine. A comparison with the equipment of today is indeed an object lesson in progress and development and inspires us to pay a tribute to the energy and vision of those transportation-minded men of the past and present who made this transition possible.

Brief portions of special interest from the booklet now follow:

PART I.

"Forging the Burlington System."

"Forerunner: The Aurora Branch—The Burlington system began to operate in 1850 because the citizens of Aurora would wait no longer for a rail connection with Chicago. Their determination was based on the fact that Chicago was located at a natural and long-established crossroads of trade and transportation.

Even before the coming of explorers, the Indians discovered that the easiest way from the Mighty Mississippi to the Great Lakes lay up the Illinois River, across the brief portage at Mud Lake, and on down the Chicago River to Lake Michigan. The Indians of upper Wisconsin also passed through the site of the present metropolis as they rounded the lake on their way eastward.

When the white man came, he followed the routes already established. Joliet, Pere Marquette, and LaSalle all used the "Portage Path" that led from the Mississippi, and the strategic site at the mouth of the Chicago River figured as a prize in Anglo-American relations for a generation after the Revolutionary War. The erection of Fort Dearborn in 1803 was to protect this crossroads, where Chicago was founded as a town 30 years later.

Despite the earlier settlement of the southern portion of Illinois, the new village on the lake had become one of the state's most important towns by 1837. Paradoxically enough, however, the Illinois internal improvement bill of that year, which projected 1,341 miles of railroad for the state (only 57 were built by 1850!) left Chicago 83 miles from the nearest line. This was because the Illinois-Michigan Canal, then under construction, was planned to provide an answer for the city's transportation requirements. Before it was completed, however, its inadequacy was apparent. Neither canal nor stage coach could handle the traffic which inevitably passed by way of Chicago. Meanwhile, the success of the iron horse in America was established and, by the lates 'forties, two eastern lines were already reaching out towards the city. Action could be delayed no longer. Men like Stephen A. Douglas, Sidney Breese and William Ogden of Chicago, together with leading citizens in Galena, Galesburg, Peoria, Rock Island and other towns took definite steps to build a network of Illinois railroads that would provide adequate transportation facilities for the largest city of the state.

Their efforts were rewarded when, on October 10, 1848, Chicago's first locomotive — the ten-ton, second-hand "Pioneer" — arrived to run over the Galena & Chicago Union railroad (now part of the Chicago and North Western system). At this time, the tracks extended only a few miles west of the city, but each month thereafter saw them move westward towards the Mississippi. A new era was opening for Northern Illinois in which many an ambitious community was hoping to play a part.

One such town to translate its ambition into action was Aurora, whose citizens, on February 12, 1849, obtained a charter to build

12 miles of railroad directly north from their town to a junction with the Galena line. Appropriately naming their venture the Aurora Branch, they ordered a survey to be undertaken immediately, and on December 20, 1849, let the first contracts for grading and masonry work. By April 15, they authorized the survey of an extension to the Illinois River to be built as soon as they could complete their original undertaking; already they were dreaming of expansion. On August 31, 1850, six miles of wooden rails, covered with narrow iron strips, were ready for use between Turner Junction, on the Galena Road, and Batavia. On that date, a tiny squib in Chicago's newspapers announced that service on this second line to enter the city would commence three days later. As yet, the young railroad had no rolling stock of its own, so it was necessary to hire the little "Pioneer" and a single coach for the occasion.

This was the train that puffed out of Batavia at six-thirty o'clock on the morning of September 2, 1850, to make the inaugural run of the Aurora Branch to Chicago. Thus modestly began the operation of the Burlington system.

Progress was now rapid. By October 4, the new company completed its line to Aurora, and on October 21, 1850, regular service began from that city according to the following schedule:

Lv.	Aurora	7 a.m. and 3 p.m.	Lv.	Chicago	8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Ar.	Chicago	11 a.m. and 6 p.m.	Ar.	Aurora	10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

About this time, the Aurora Branch acquired two locomotives of its own: the "Whittlesey," a 12-ton engine with four drivers, purchased from the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Railway, and the 14-ton "Pigeon" that had been built by Baldwin in 1837 for use on the original Michigan Central Railroad.

By the end of 1850, the new line was well-established. The date was significant; in that year Chicago boasted a population of 28,620, and Congress set a new precedent when it granted over two and one-half million acres of public land to aid in the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad. The railway age had come for Chicago, for Illinois, and for the Middle West!

Eastern Dollars and Western Optimism: The C. B. & Q. in Illinois

It would be interesting to speculate upon the fate of the Aurora Branch had that little railroad been forced to depend only on its own resources, but such was not to be the case. In 1846, James F. Joy, an alert young Detroit lawyer, and a youthful engineer, John W. Brooks, had persuaded the Boston capitalist, John Murray Forbes, to invest his money in the dilapidated state-built Michigan Central Railroad. At the time, its shaky tracks extended only to Kalamazoo, but with eastern capital and western pluck, it was rebuilt and extended on to Lake Michigan and finally to Chicago on May 21, 1852, where it triumphantly opened through service one day ahead of its arch-competitor, the Michigan Southern. The entry of these roads into the hustling metropolis, however, was merely an incident in their rivalry. Already the men behind the Michigan Southern had control of the Chicago and Rock Island, and since October, 1851, had been pushing that line from Chicago on towards Joliet. Unless Forbes, Joy and Brooks could find a western outlet, their Michigan Central could hardly expect to share in the tremendous potential trade west of the lake.

Fortunately for them, Illinois was a fertile field for railroad promotion in the spring of 1852. Almost every little town was hoping to gain connections with the outside world. Some places, like Aurora, had realized their ambitions, but many others had nothing more than "paper railroads," still-born for lack of funds. In such a predicament was Galesburg, whose Central Military Tract Railroad, projected northward to a connection with the future Rock Island had not yet attracted enough stock subscriptions to warrant construction. Further south, Peoria and Oquawka were linked by a "proposed" railroad named after the two towns, but not a foot of rail had been laid. It was at this point that fate took a hand. . . . .

At the old American House, in Boston, early in the spring of 1852, Chauncey Colton, of the Central Military Tract, happened to meet Elisha Wadsworth, a director of the Aurora Branch, and James W. Grimes, then director of the Peoria and Oquawka, and later governor of Iowa. These three men put their heads together. They knew that the Michigan Central people were seeking a western connection. Therefore, why not plan to consolidate their three lines into a single through route between Chicago and the Mississippi, and apply to Forbes for financial backing?

The plan was no sooner hatched than it went into effect – but not without the usual difficulties involved in a new venture. Forbes in the East and Colton in the West were hard put to find enough funds to pay for construction. In less than three years, however, their project was completed, and, on March 17, 1855, a through line was opened from Chicago through Aurora, Mendota, and Galesburg to East Burlington, which had replaced Oquawka, as the western terminus. To celebrate this auspicious event, a special ten-car train ran westward from Chicago, and a mammoth reception was held in Burlington, Iowa, on May 30, 1855. Stephen A. Douglas, Lewis Cass, Mayor Boone of Chicago, and Governor Grimes of Iowa were present; contemporary accounts describe the affair as lasting far into the night. A few months before this jubilee, on February 11, 1855, the companies forming the through line had joined together under the name of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad; when their branch from Galesburg to Quincy was completed January 11, 1856, the new title exactly described the location of their property.

At this time, Burlington trains from Aurora entered Chicago over the former Aurora Branch tracks via Turner Junction and the Galena & Chicago Union. In 1858, however, the people of Naperville, Downers Grove, Brush Hill and Lyons pledged the right of way for a short-cut to Chicago through Du Page County. By 1862, the volume of traffic was expanding so rapidly that the directors accepted this offer and authorized their only expansion during the Civil War – the building of an independent line, 38 miles long, directly from Aurora to Chicago. This cut-off was opened for service in 1864.

Meanwhile, plans were laid by an independent company to build a railroad from Rock Island southward to the Burlington's main line at Monmouth and thence to East St. Louis. After years of delay, this project was completed, and in February, 1877, the road came under the control of the C. B. & Q., thus providing the system with an entrance into the St. Louis district.

First Rails to the Missouri River: The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad.

Even before the Aurora Branch Railroad was formed in Illinois, a most important link in the future Burlington system was being forged in Missouri. Sometime during the year 1846, a group of forward-looking citizens at Hannibal met in the office of John M. Clemens (the father of Mark Twain) to lay plans for a railroad across the state. Their enthusiasm was fully reciprocated by the people of St. Joseph where the projected line was to end, and, on February 16, 1847, the Missouri Legislature granted a charter for a 206-mile railroad between the two towns. Construction, however, did not begin until 1852 when Congress offered the company the inducement of a substantial land grant in return for a permanent reduction on the transportation of government troops, property and mail. Encouraged by this fact, John Murray Forbes and his colleagues supplied the capital that enabled construction to begin. Thereafter, the railroad progressed steadily for those days of hand labor, and the two gangs that had begun work at each end met between Chillicothe and Cream Ridge on February 13, 1859. The very next day a train made the through run from Hannibal to St. Joseph, thus inaugurating rail service between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. On April 1, 1860, the opening of the line between Palmyra and West Quincy provided a connection, by ferry, with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy.

Almost immediately, a dramatic episode demonstrated the importance of the Hannibal and St. Joseph. Prior to the building of this railroad, transcontinental mail had proceeded westward by steamer and stage. On April 3, 1860, however, a special train, hauled by a wood-burning locomotive, carried the mail from Hannibal to St. Joseph in slightly over four hours. Upon arrival, the letters were handed over to the rider scheduled to make the first relay on the inaugural westbound run of the famous Pony Express. Two years later another epoch-making improvement was introduced when, on July 28, 1862, the first railroad car equipped for sorting the United States mail in transit ran westward from Quincy to the Missouri River.

The War years raised havoc with the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad. Bridges were burned, property destroyed and the rails torn up by raiding armies. Thus, not only were operations hazardous, but it was next to impossible to sell the lands granted by the United States. The company had counted on these sales as an important source of revenue. "Eastern people," wrote the Land Commissioner in April, 1861, "have begun to arrive here, but when they see the secession flags flying in our streets, they are afraid to buy, and several have taken the next boat home without going out on the road at all." Eventually Federal Troops built a string of blockhouses along the route, and safeguarded the operations of the railroad until the end of the War.

No sooner was the War over, however, than the Hannibal and St. Joseph began to improve its connections and reach into new territory. On November 9, 1868, the road obtained a direct physical link with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy when, under the leadership of James F. Joy, a bridge was completed over the Mississippi River at Quincy. Meanwhile, work had begun on a branch southward from Cameron Junction, Missouri and on July 4, 1869, the company opened the first bridge to span the Missouri River and thus established through service into Kansas City.

The Burlington's annual report in 1870 showed that freight from points on the Hannibal and St. Joseph destined for Chicago had nearly doubled in amount during the preceding year. During the 'seventies, traffic interchange between the two companies steadily increased, so that in 1880, when the H. & St. J. seriously considered building a line of its own to Chicago, it was not surprising that the Directors of the Burlington opened negotiations for the purchase of the Missouri road. This was accomplished on June 18, 1883, and the famous "St. Jo Line" became an integral part of the Burlington system.

Westward to the Rockies: The Burlington and Missouri River Railroads.

The expansion of the C. B. & Q. westward through Iowa, Nebraska and Colorado is the story of a whole generation, for it was exactly 30 years from the time the first constituent road was projected west from the Mississippi, in 1852, until it reached its goal at Denver, Colorado. Into those years were packed the trials and hardships of frontier life, the difficulties of wartime operation, the dramatic episode of colonization, a major financial crisis, and, finally, the period of robust prosperity that saw the great corn and wheat country come into its own.

The origin of the "Burlington Route" as a pathway westward from the great river is lost in the mists of history; it may have been originally a buffalo trace. In any event, when the Black Hawk purchase in eastern Iowa was first opened to white settlement in 1833, a well-traveled Indian trail existed where runs the present main line of the railroad, and in 1839 a plank road company began to operate from Burlington – named after the city in Vermont – to Mt. Pleasant, 28 miles to the west. White oak planks, however, were unable to bear the increasing traffic, and in January, 1852, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company was formed by local business men to build across the state. At first, its future was uncertain, but in 1855, the C. B. & Q. reached the Mississippi River at East Burlington and was looking for a western connection. Furthermore, in 1856, Congress offered the Iowa Company a land grant on terms similar to those made with the Hannibal and St. Joseph. Thus, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad became an attractive investment for Forbes and Joy, who at once began soliciting funds for its construction. As a result of their efforts, enough money was raised, despite the Panic of 1857, to finance the Iowa line as far as Ottumwa on the Des Moines River, which was reached on September 1, 1859. This was an exceedingly important achievement, because the new railroad could now tap the lucrative river trade which had hitherto gone eastward by water. The Civil War, however, with the consequent scarcity of men and capital, and the uncertainty of trade, prevented the B. & M. from building further westward while hostilities continued.

When peace finally returned the B. & M. participated in the rapid development of the Great West. Under the guidance of the youthful Charles E. Perkins, construction was resumed at Ottumwa in July, 1865, and completed to the banks of the Missouri River at East Plattsmouth on New Year's Day, 1870. Meanwhile, an entrance into Council Bluffs had been gained via

Pacific Junction over the tracks of the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs, a railroad subsequently (in 1900) consolidated with the C. B. & Q. Progress across Iowa had indeed been slow, resembling in its uncertainty the halting trek of individual settlers across the prairie. Nevertheless, the company reached its goal without going through bankruptcy — a rare achievement indeed — and was ready to share in the rich traffic that was expected to develop in eastern Nebraska. Meanwhile, on August 13, 1867, completion of the Mississippi River bridge at Burlington provided a through rail line to Chicago, and on the last day of 1872, the B. & M. was absorbed by the C. B. & Q.

Even before this consolidation, work was under way on an extension westward. In 1864, Congress had granted the B. & M. permission to build a short cut from a point in Nebraska (Plattsmouth) opposite its western terminus to a junction with the Union Pacific near Ft. Kearney, offering as an inducement a land grant of more than two million acres in Nebraska on the usual terms. It was not until 1869 that the Iowa Company felt able to accept this offer, but, on May 12 of that year, the officials formed a separate corporation called the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska. Two months later, construction began at Plattsmouth, and, during the summer of 1870, the rails reached Lincoln, the new capital, which was rapidly becoming a flourishing city. In 1871, control of the Omaha and Southwestern provided an independent entrance into Omaha via Oreapolis. Finally, despite the threat of Indian attacks and the difficulties of construction in a virtually uninhabited country, the main line of 194 miles was completed westward to Kearney Junction on September 18, 1872.

As the new railroad speeded the settlement of eastern Nebraska, its increase in business matched the growth of the region, and by the time the Missouri River bridge at Plattsmouth was opened on September 12, 1880, it had constructed numerous branches and commenced an extension to Colorado by way of Red Cloud. In the meantime, on July 26, 1880, the Nebraska company became a part of the C. B. & Q. Thus, when the rails reached Denver on May 29, 1882, the Burlington system was the first railroad to provide through service from that city to Chicago under single management. It was also in a position to become part of a transcontinental rout through, and not around, Denver.

Northwestward to Grain and Lumber: The Twin Cities Line.

No sooner had the Burlington reached the Rockies than its attention was drawn to a new, fast-developing region — the vast timber and spring wheat empire northwest of Chicago. By 1885, the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad created by James J. Hill had pushed its track northward to a connection with the Canadian Pacific Railroad, and the Northern Pacific had completed its transcontinental line to Puget Sound. Both these railroads terminated at St. Paul and Minneapolis, with the result that these cities were growing into important market and transfer points. Their trade with Chicago and St. Louis was steadily increasing, and it was apparent that it would grow even more rapidly as lumber from Wisconsin and Minnesota moved southward, and as coal from Illinois found its way north. In view of all these factors, the Burlington sponsored an entirely new railroad, named the Chicago, Burlington & Northern, to run northwestward from the Illinois lines of C. B. & Q. to the Mississippi at Savanna and thence up the east bank of the river to St. Paul. A traffic arrangement was concluded between the new road and the "Q," and an agreement was made whereby the latter would gain complete control of its northern extension.

Construction proceeded with unusual rapidity, and on October 24, 1886 a party of journalists accompanied the officials who "flew" on the first train over the new line from St. Paul to Chicago in eleven hours and ten minutes. The next day, newspapers in Minneapolis and St. Paul waxed highly enthusiastic: road bed, motive power and scenery all received their share of the praise, and one account declared that the new sleeping cars were "of the latest fashion and palatial in their appointments." From that day forward the "Upper Mississippi Scenic Line" took its place as a vital link in the Burlington system between St. Louis and Chicago on the one hand, and Prairie Du Chien, Dubuque, LaCrosse, the Twin Cities, and the Pacific Northwest on the other.

Expansion and Consolidation.

During the 'eighties the railroad network of the United States grew from 93,671 to 159,271 miles, an increase of over 65,000 miles, equal to 70 per cent of the mileage built in the preceding half century. This tremendous activity was reflected on the Burlington not only by the completion of the Denver and Twin Cities lines, but also by the construction of numerous branches to accommodate the new farms, ranges, mines and towns between the Missouri River and the Rockies. Of particular importance were: the lines southward to Centralia, Illinois, to tap the coal fields of that region, alternate main line across southern Nebraska from DeWitt westerly to Sterling, Colorado, and Cheyenne, Wyoming, and finally, a road from York, Nebraska, northwestward to Alliance, thence on to the coal mines at Edgemont, South Dakota and Newcastle, Wyoming. Between December 31, 1880 and December 31, 1890, the Burlington system grew from 2,771 to 5,160 miles.

In 1894, the branch to Alliance and Newcastle was extended to a connection with the Northern Pacific at Billings, and six years later a link from Alliance to Brush on the Chicago-Denver line enabled the Northern Pacific and Burlington to provide a short route between the Pacific Northwest and such points as Omaha, St. Joseph, Kansas City, and St. Louis. At the close of the year 1900, the C. B. & Q. operated 7,545 miles of its own lines, and 736 miles of controlled roads. The company's capitalization consisted of: $110,577,700 in common stock and $147,204,300 in bonds.

On April 17, 1901, it was announced in the New York papers that this magnificent property had come under the control of James J. Hill and his financial agent, J. P. Morgan. There were many reasons on both sides for this serious far-reaching step. Just before the turn of the century, James J. Hill, who had pushed his Great Northern to the coast in 1893, became heavily interested in the Northern Pacific Railway Co. The chief traffic originating on these two northern lines consisted of grain, livestock, ore, lumber, and some other products from the coast, as well as imports from the Orient. This traffic was eastbound, and much of it, especially lumber, was destined for the treeless corn belt region served by the Burlington. It would be a distinct advantage for the northern lines to have direct access to this market. Furthermore, Hill and Morgan keenly desired a direct connection from the north into the manufacturing centers and coal fields of Illinois. Such a connection would supply the west-bound freight — some of it destined for the Orient — that would prevent cars from returning empty. In addition, the C. B. & Q. served Omaha, St. Joseph, Kansas City and Chicago, where the packing houses and market for the cattle and sheep of the northwestern ranges were located. At St. Louis and Kansas City, connections were available with lines traversing the southern states, from which came the raw and manufactured cotton required for shipment via the Pacific Northwest to China and Japan. From the standpoint of the Burlington, the new alliance assured a permanent through connection to Puget Sound, a valuable source of traffic interchange, and affiliation with one of the greatest railroad geniuses of America. It also made it unnecessary for the Burlington to build its own line to the Pacific Northwest.

During the twentieth century, the major extension of the C. B. & Q. was accomplished by the acquisition, on December 21, 1908, of over 1,800 miles operated by the Colorado and Southern Railway, and its various subsidiaries, including the Fort Worth and Denver City and the Wichita Valley Lines. This transaction brought to the Burlington system a through line from Cheyenne and Denver southward to Fort Worth, Dallas, Houston and Galveston, and provided, by way of Alliance, a new short route from the Pacific Northwest to the Gulf. To improve the service with the northern roads, an alternate low-grade line was built almost immediately by the C. B. & Q. from Billings via Casper to the northern terminus of the Colorado and Southern at Orin Junction.

During the last generation, the Burlington's development has been intensive rather than extensive. Although the railroad plant has actually shrunk in road mileage, its capacity has been vastly increased by the building of multiple tracks, and by the use of improved equipment and new techniques. At present, the company operates more than 11,000 miles of road in 14 states — a striking contrast with the little 12-mile railway that began its operation just 90 years ago."

Part II records the Burlington efforts and assistance in the early building of the communities, the cities and towns it served, always helpful in times of stress in reduced rates and free shipments. In fact an integral part of each and every community in all things for its betterment and progress.

Part III — Creating the Modern Railroad — as the subject indicates, this part covers the transition from the 10-ton "Pioneer" engine that inaugurated Burlington operations to the 230-ton Giants that are capable of putting more than 100 loaded freight cars or a score of passenger cars on the present-day fast schedules. The story of the intervening years is one of steady progress in equipment, road-bed, ties, rails and signals.

"The original strap rail, laid on the Aurora Branch in 1850, was the same as that used on the Stockton and Burlington railroad in England in 1825, and the Baltimore and Ohio 5 years later. In 1853, however, the iron T-rail made its appearance on the system, and this in turn was replaced by the first Bessemer steel rails in 1867. Up to this date, the heaviest rail in use on the C. B. & Q. weighed 56 pounds per yard, but as the rolling stock became heavier, rail weights increased proportionately. In 1909, when Open Hearth steel replaced that made by the Bessemer process, maximum weight was 90 pounds per yard. Today that figure has been increased to 131 pounds per yard."

Safety in travel and shipments of commodities has kept pace with the vast and expensive improvements in the railroad, and with the increased speed possible in operation, it places us, who were isolated as to markets, a next door neighbor to the cities and markets of the world. Aside from the transportation furnished by the railroad, it bestows another great benefit to all the communities through which it passes, in the taxes it pays on its road-bed and equipment. Many civic improvements are thus made possible and partially financed by it. Through this help, improved and higher institutions of learning are fostered and perpetuated. Its value and helpfulness to the people in all walks of life, in the communities it serves, should be and is appreciated. As to its future, judging by the past, it will ever be one of progress and dependability.

I quote the "conclusion" of the closing part of the little booklet History:

"The Burlington system is proud of the fact that for 90 years its service has become steadily safer, more rapid and more adaptable to the increasingly diverse needs of the shipping and traveling public. There are many reasons for the company's record of progress. From the beginning, a consistently conservative management has sought to keep capitalization low, to plow profits back into the transportation plant and to finance new ventures from earnings; as a result, the Burlington has never defaulted upon or compromised an obligation. At the same time, there has been a liberal disposition to expand into new territories and to experiment with the latest technical improvements in railroading. For their part, employees have contributed to the business success of the system by their loyalty and ready acceptance of responsibility.

As in the case of an individual, however, the life of a railroad cannot be told fully in terms of business alone. Throughout its 90 years, the Burlington has been part of the western community. It has shared the hopes and fears of prairie farmers, toiled side by side with the builders of cities, and experienced the alternate effects of prosperity and depression. Through its colonization work, and through its own family of workers, the "Q" has been intimately identified with the social and cultural development of its territory. Again like an individual, it has made many friends and, unfortunately, some enemies. It has performed good deeds, and made its mistakes, for a railroad too must learn by experience.

At the end of the first 90 years, the Burlington stands ready to play its part in the American West, a West still fired with enthusiasm, the courage and the imagination of its pioneers."

Chapter XXII

Progress, 1880

UNDER the inspiring word, Progress, the author writes of the great Burlington coming to Indianola, and the material prospects of that ambitious city. So the Burlington came, and it was not long until its great system and empire building centered its interest in the city of McCook, and took away the prestige of terminal, station and county seat. All agreed, and had agreed, that great was the Burlington. McCook is its midwestern shrine. It lies midway between Lincoln and Denver, capital of the Rocky Mountains, yet Indianola, substantial and enterprising, is carving its own destiny as a unit of the west. A strong bank is established, a Republican River is bridged, and a cyclone is suffered.

An Old Settlers Association is organized. Government claims filed upon and turned into homes, while millions of trees are planted, and many growing, and year after year there are abundance of crops.

* * *

The year 1880 was a dry year, plenty of feed and fodder, but very little corn on the upland or divides. Many of the homesteaders, too poor to stand the loss of their corn crop, went on west or returned to their former homes, abandoning their claims, which were contested and taken up by others coming later. The winter of 1880-1881 I again became the herder, or cowboy, as we were called then. Our crops being so short and with a family to care for, father decided to take in cattle to winter. We had 80 acres of good corn stalks on his west farm and there was a wide bottom canyon with tributaries south of this farm that was unsettled and had not been grazed. He made a deal with V. Franklin, a merchant in Indianola who had about 120 cattle, to winter them at 20c per head per month, the going price. Grazing them when there was no snow and feeding in the stalks when grazing was impossible. We had about 20 head of cattle of our own that we added to the herd. It was an open winter and the stalks were sufficient for grazing most of the time when it stormed and the cattle came out in the spring in good thrifty condition.

I was then 15 years of age, took the cattle out every morning and was out with them until night. We watered at the creek and for a couple of months, ice had to be cut and removed so the cattle could drink. Yes, it was some job but added about $18 per month above my board as a net cash income, a sizeable and helpful sum indeed.

The buffalo had for many years been killed for their hides or robes, as they were called, and their bones in large quantities were lying strewn over the prairie and canyons. In 1880, after the coming of the railroad to Indianola, a market was created for them at $2 to $3 per ton. This proved to be of material help to some of the divide homesteaders who turned "bone pickers," as they were called. At first a triple box full could be secured with very little effort, then a day to Indianola and return with needed groceries. This was carried on until the country was literally swept clean of bones, but by this means many of the homesteaders provided their living during the winter and stuck with their claims. I recall a Mr. Lyons saying to my father, "Who would have thought that the bleached bones we have seen mar the countryside would provide a living for so many distressed families. It surely seems that in some way or other, the Lord will provide." I recall that a preacher, one night at a revival meeting when the going was tough, made a similar remark about the Lord providing. He said, "Don't get discouraged and leave, trust in the Lord, and He will grind the moon into meal before He will let His children starve." As we had been having corn bread of the coarse ground variety, no flour to mix with it, I thought 'if it come to that, I hope He will make it flour.' Light bread or biscuits would have been cake to us then. We simply did not have it.

With the coming of the railroad to Indianola in 1880, and making this village its terminal for a time, Indianola grew rapidly in 1880 and 1881 in the business section and quite a few residences were erected, making the little city look and appear prosperous. All lines of business were represented. The Red Willow County Bank was established, largely owned and operated by J. W. Dolan. Later this bank converted into a First National Bank with $50,000.00 capital and then in 1891 finding itself over-capitalized, converted into a State Bank with $20,000.00 capital, and controlled and managed by J. W. Dolan until about 1905 when he sold his interest to other parties, relinquishing its management and moving to California. There were several general stores, hardware, furniture, and drug stores – where drugs could be purchased, but in the drug stores of that day the main income and business was the dispensing of liquor. There were other business places such as a bakery, blacksmith, livery barn and cigar manufacturing store. Several doctors now made Indianola their place of business as did several lawyers, land, and loan agents.

With this growth, a bridge across the Republican river was being discussed and brought about by bonding Indianola precinct to largely cover its cost. This bridge was a very much desired and needed improvement, greatly appreciated by those on the south side of the river, as the driving through the river was dreaded on account of the shifting sands, deep channels thus formed and the unstable bottom in unpredictable places produced by the quicksands. The bridge eliminated all this worry and effort in crossing.

In the spring of 1881, we experienced our first cyclone. Mr. J. C. Lafferty and family lived in our dugout, while building their frame house on his claim, and thus being neighbors practically in the same yard, became very friendly. Their home was the second frame house in our territory. A story and a half with cellar under part, and as I recall perhaps 16 x 26 feet in size. I was helping him build a sod chicken house and finished the work May 7th. On Monday evening, May 9th, 1881, seeing that a storm was approaching from the southwest, they decided to go to the cellar. Mr. Lafferty, with a boy of about 2½ years in his arms, opened the door and a son of about 4½ went down, he following, and his wife followed, with a little girl of about a year in her arms. The cyclone struck while Mrs. Lafferty was still on the steps, lifting the house and utterly destroying it, parts of the furniture and material being blown many miles.

Mrs. Lafferty and child were killed, her body being about 300 feet distant and the child about 100 feet from her. It was indeed a sad and tragic happening to the family and the community, as well as an irreparable loss. They were tenderly laid away in the Danbury cemetery and neighbors helped him build a sod house that fall.

In March, 1881, we had a new sister come into our home and she surely was made welcome by the other five children of the family. She was the youngest and last, and we children, four boys and two girls, all grew to be men and women; reared families of our own, and all six are living today (1940), cemented together with love for one another and happy in our occasional reunions. Scattered, yes — two brothers in California, a sister in Illinois, a sister in Danbury, Nebraska and brother Will owner of and living on the old home near Danbury on which we grew up, and I in Benkelman, Nebr. We surely feel that the years have in many ways dealt kindly with us and while none of us are wealthy, the good Lord has never had need to be concerned over "Grinding the moon into meal."

The winter of 1881-1882 we had six months' school with Miss Katie Dunning as our teacher and, with the newcomers located, we had quite a large school, as I recall some over 30 and with the additions to our classes the work became more helpful and interesting. Miss Dunning was a hard worker, a strict disciplinarian, but in spite of her efforts there would be infractions creep in which she took too seriously. She once said of me that "Forster Stilgebouer could be the best boy and the meanest I ever saw." I guess at times I was just a live, mischievous boy. I was never punished or publicly reproved by her and we were always good friends until her death some years ago.

She assisted in the organization of the Old Settlers Association of Red Willow County, was its secretary many years, a splendid wife and mother, a good neighbor and friend. Her daugher, Mrs. Asa Wolfe, the wife of the now county superintendent of schools, is the present secretary of the association and an ardent supporter of its principles. Through the efforts of E. E. Spencer and others, a pageant was planned for August, 1940, depicting the early life and settlement of Red Willow county. It was planned to re-enact different periods of Red Willow county's earliest history — the early trappers, the Indians in council and war dance, an Indian raid, the coming of the homesteaders and, in closing, a review of the pioneer life and its passing, and a look into the future. The writer was associated in the last part. It took place August 29 and 30, 1940 in the city park in Indianola, on the evening of each day, following the annual Old Settlers' picnic. The scythe of time, that leveler of all human endeavors, has marked the passing of the early and oldest settlers, very few, even of the later homesteaders remaining, but their children carry on and keep alive their deeds, their aspirations and their memories.

Quite a number of non-resident men only filed on so-called tree claims, or timber culture claims, 160 acre tracts. I presume this was largely done as a matter of speculation, as later many did relinquish their rights for only nominal sums. The law governing tree claims was that 5 acres of prairie was to be broken (plowed) the first year, five acres the second year and the first five backset (replowed) and the third year the first five acres again replowed — the second five acres backset and the first 5 acres was to be planted in trees four feet each way and cultivated and on the fourth year the second five acres was to be planted in trees, thus making 10 acres and to be cultivated. At the end of five years a certain number of living trees per acre were required in order to prove up and secure a patent from the government for the land. If you did not have trees enough, you were required to replant and cultivate until you had the required number.

We planted our claim in cottonwood, saved a few acres on lower ground, planted them to walnuts shipped in from Missouri — gathered and hulled by me while we were visiting at Berger, Missouri. These came up and died so we replanted with ash, and thus secured the number of living trees required and our patent. We had the job of breaking the required acreage on several of these timber claims in the early 80's, driving from a few miles to eight or ten miles to the land. Father would locate and measure the land, and Will and I would do the breaking, sometimes alone, sometimes together. For this work we would receive $1 per acre. We would load three or four barrels of water in our wagon, camp out while on the job and thus secure some much needed cash. I especially recall a five acre tract I broke about midway between Indianola and now Danbury. It was in June, 1880, very dry, and a yoke of red bulls was my team. The plow used was known as a grasshopper plow. Its shear was nearly square across and instead of a moldboard it had curved rods to turn the sod. That make of plow did a better job in the dry buffalo sod than a moldboard plow, stayed in the soil better and pulled easier. It was so dry that I left a trail of dust behind me as the sod was turned and so hot that the bulls would become sulky, fight each other, lie down and really made it a very difficult job. I worked early and late and let them eat and rest through midday and finished in a week. I have previously referred to sticking to my job under difficulties when eleven years of age. I thought of that circumstance and it surely was a help to me in carrying this job, miles from anyone, to a finish.

Will and I did a number of jobs of this nature and also helped plant several tree claims and thus secured some cash that was of material help to the family. This sort of odd jobs lasted from 1880 to 1883, when the tree claims were largely owned by local people and the work done by them. In the planting of the tree claims, the land was first plowed, harrowed several times to pack it in a smooth tilth, then marked out by a team pulling a sort of sled runners on which the driver stood, runners being 4 feet apart, then some were cross marked in a similar manner. The trees were planted on the corners of each square, or where the markers crossed. Trees planted were 16 to 20 inches in length including roots and the method was, a barrel of water was taken to the field in the wagon and the trees purchased from nurseries were hauled in and wet down to retain their freshness and life; then the planter would take one or two hundred in his bucket, partially filled with water, and with a spade dug in at the cross, push the handle forward, creating a space behind the spade, put in the tree, pull out the spade and tramp the earth firmly around the roots. It was hard, tiresome, back-breaking work, but in that manner they usually lived, and by being marked as they were cross cultivation was possible, and required much less labor with the hoe.

The law permitted filing on a tree claim in every section where there was no natural timber, except Sections 16 and 36, they being state school lands, and many such claims were taken and planted. It is a fact that there is very little evidence of it today—1940—for as the trees grew and more moisture being required than nature provided, they died a natural death after growing too large to cultivate. The so-called "Roosevelt Shelterbelt" to us old-timers, after our experience, is doomed to failure when it gets sufficient size to make shelter, but it, like the early tree planting we experienced, has one merit — it makes jobs.

The years 1881 and 1882 we had sufficient rainfall to produce fairly good crops, but prices were low and very little profit. In those days, it was the custom of the communities to exchange work and help each other, and in most years, our hired labor was paid for in this way, thus we had for our labor the crops we produced. We had a few hundred bushels of wheat in 1882 and by reason of low price this was placed in a granary. We had corn and plenty of feed for our stock in stack. Our father's health was failing, his severe sick headaches becoming more frequent, and thinking that a change of climate and more of a fresh fruit diet might be helpful, father and mother decided to go by covered wagon and team of horses to Shelbyville, Illinois — his old home, for the winter. I was then 17 years of age. Brother Will was 19 and Solomon would soon be 12. It was decided to leave Will and Sol at home to batch and keep the home fires burning and I was to go with the family as teamster and to do such other things as were required on a journey of that sort. Our finances were meager, we expected to and did camp and cook our meals on the way, thus reducing our expenses to a minimum. Our traveling family were father, mother, Ella-15, Edward-7, Lulu-1½, and I.

Chapter XXIII

Covered Wagon — Our Trip to Illinois

HOW many romances, ventures, hardships and tragedies have been written concerning this subject in the great winning of the West. Missouri mud is described not with sarcasm but with the suggestion that how often we in Nebraska would hail with welcome some Missouri mud. That state, if built around with walls, could better produce its own living than any other state in the union. I speak not of progress in other lines. The covered wagon trip is filled with much human interest.

* * *

We left home about two p.m. September 15, 1882 in a covered wagon and drove to a neighbor eight miles down the creek, Mr. Bradbury, and stayed over night. On the 16th we drove to Beaver City and stayed over night with a former neighbor, Frank Nickolson. After that we were on our own, camping out. Our route was mapped out down the Beaver to Orleans, then on down the Republican Valley to Superior. We had home-cured meat, butter of mother's making, flour and other eatables. Also a so-called Dutch oven, it being a large cast iron skillet with a cover; set it on coals with legs to support it and coals on the lid, biscuits soon were baked, and such baking powder biscuits as mother served. Father improved rapidly and, after a few days on the road and a few nights camping, we all enjoyed it. Roads then were mere trails or rutted and rough, sometimes good, sometimes bad, dusty and indifferent.

At Superior, Nebraska, the Republican river turns south into Kansas, and empties into the Kansas or Caw river. This we followed to Topeka, then on, entering Missouri twelve miles south of Kansas City, as stated on a guide post at that point. I kept a diary on the trip, recording every place we camped at noon or night, but over the years it became lost. Entering Missouri, it was our purpose to visit Hermann and Berger, Mo., where father was at one time a railroader and where we lived four years, it being 75 miles west of St. Louis. The trip through Missouri was without mishap and on the whole enjoyed, but such roads. In many places roads were unworked up hills and down, driving through sticky mud, which we could use in Nebraska, fording streams, and varied experiences. There were two things through Missouri I think worthy of mention, feed for horses and dogs met up with. We of the west were hospitably inclined and no one was turned away who desired feed for man or beast. We usually bought our supplies for the family in the towns through which we passed, and depended on the farms for hay and corn, always paying for it. It was indeed surprising to us, when calling at farm houses, to be told that they had none to sell. This was my job and I usually got it by telling them where we were from and our destination, but not always without several trials as we drove along. Now as to the dogs, if there are any meaner, more lop-eared, ferocious, teeth-showing, growling dogs than I encountered on that trip through Missouri, I surely never want to even see their pictures.

We arrived at Berger, Missouri and the folks spent a delightful week with their former neighbors, who really were very kind and hospitable to us and begged us not to leave so soon. Father and the family, as it was rainy weather, went by train to St. Louis and I drove the team through. It took three full days to make the trip of 75 miles, camping on the way. We spent another day in St. Louis after I arrived, visiting my father's aunt and family and Sidney Haines and family, a former neighbor in Berger, Missouri.

We drove through rain most of the 108 miles from St. Louis to Shelbyville, Illinois, arriving there on October 14 – being thirty days on the way – and were so enthusiastically received by our relatives as to feel more than welcome. We spent the winter there among our people and the families of father's boyhood friends and really had a good time – I attending school.

As March, 1833 approached, father and mother were ready to start for home. The spring was wet, the roads almost impassable. In driving to Shelbyville, from the short distance in the country that we were, the mud would roll up on the wheels until at times you could scarcely see the spokes. The horses would go down to their knees in the mud, at times. Hard pulling, and the going down hills was even worse, so father and mother decided to return by train. Sold the team and wagon and in due time as the trains ran then, arrived in Indianola. Boy! oh! Boy! Did the dust that was blowing on the street look good to me? It surely did. Will was there to meet us and over the good dry roads we drove the 18 miles and were soon home. Father's health was much improved and the family again reunited and all of us happy. We loved good old Nebraska more than ever.

There is one incident I wish to record in reference to Will and Sol by way of contrast to present markets and manner of marketing. Father owed $100 at the Indianola bank and it was drawing near maturity. He wrote Will to haul enough wheat to pay the debt to Indianola – a distance of about 18 miles as the roads then were. Will borrowed a wagon from a neighbor, loaded two loads, about 100 bushels, and started with a span of horses and a yoke of oxen. On arrival at Indianola, buyers would not buy as they could not get enough to ship by railroad. They drove to Cambridge, to the mill, thinking to sell there but they also had all they wanted. Then on down the valley to Arapahoe and sold the wheat. Three days hard driving going and three days returning and no more wheat wanted. This was in midwinter and it turned cold with a brisk wind blowing on their return. It was January and a hard cold ride in the open wagon, and to add to their anxiety, the oxen became foot-sore and thus slowed up their traveling. Now the farmers who do not own trucks hire men who do, to haul their grain even if only a few miles from market.

We owned several yokes of oxen, 1200 pounds to 1600 pounds each, so I worked the oxen several years, breaking prairie, plowing, hauling, etc. One neighbor with a fair-sized family bought two large cows and broke them to work, thus doing his farming and producing milk for his family. He was resourceful.

The summer of 1883 was dry and it appeared all our corn on divide land would be a loss. Joe Murphy, our neighbor, had a brother, Ben Murphy, living at Brady Island on the Platte, and it was his custom to take large acreages of hay land between there and North Platte under contract to place the hay in stack, and that near North Platte in the railroad feed yards in the town. It had also been his custom to come down to the Beaver and hire as many men as he could get to work for him through the haying job. The pay was $30 per month and board, the laborers furnishing their bed and sleeping in the open by the haystacks, or under the hay wagons. Will was then 20 and I was 18. As most of our farming was on the divide and it apparently a failure, and as we knew the needs of the family we prevailed upon father to let us go and earn some needed cash. We left home July 25 riding with Ben Murphy, our boss-to-be, a very kindly, elderly gentleman, and were three days on the road. We worked a few days finishing up his haying on his ranch at Brady Island and he then moved his outfit up near North Platte where he had a large acreage and where his additional help was to meet him August first. It began raining August first and rained three days and nights — a cold rain. We slept under a wagon loaded with hay and in the chill and damp longed for the old soddy, at least I did. After the rain cleared away, we worked in earnest, Sundays and all, at $30 per month. Time off for bad weather. Most of the time, five mowers were running and such hay as grew on that valley! We stacked large acreages in the meadows — hundreds of tons. Part of the land is now the eastern suburbs of North Platte. We hauled several hundred tons to the stock yards and, as stacking space was an item, trestles were built when we could no longer pitch from wagons and the second trestle above it until, when stacks were finished, they were about forty feet high and twenty feet wide at the bottom. North Platte at that time was a feeding-in-transit point, hence the requirement of so much hay. The hay in the meadows was baled from the stack and usually shipped to Denver.

Will had later secured a job more to his liking on the Keith Ranch at O'Fallen's west of North Platte, and when Mr. Murphy finished his contract, I obtained work with Will, which lasted about a week; then we were ready for the home journey. Our boss took us to North Platte, and we hired a man with whom we had worked to drive us to Stockville, paying him $5, it being two days of a loss of time for him, on his way home. We stayed all night at Stockville, sleeping out, and as we wanted to get home with $40.00 each and only had 65c above that, we bought crackers and cheese with 15c, reserving 50c for our dinners at Indianola. We each had a pack of about 30 to 40 pounds to carry, and left Stockville just as the sun was rising for the 25-mile walk. On the road our crackers and cheese began to get thirsty and no home or well came in sight until we neared Indianola and it about a mile distant. We passed it up and arrived in Indianola about two p.m. Got a good drink of water and a good meal for 25c each, caught a ride six miles towards home, then loaded our packs on our backs and walked home, reaching the end of 37 miles heavily loaded, but light-hearted as we had our $40 each to turn over to father. We found the family well and happy to again have us with them.

The rains mentioned in August were general and we had much more corn than thought possible on the upland and the valley corn was generally good, so we went into the winter in fine shape.

Chapter XXIV

School Days — School Teacher

THIS chapter closes with the beginning of romance — when, "In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thought of love." I have not skipped a few chapters to find out how it all happened. This chapter is especially intriguing to me. The experience seemed to have been taken from some lives in my book of remembrance. Primary difference, first, I started at $25.00 a month. "Is not that a handsome boast." I was seventeen. The germ of romance might have been proceeded but it was suppressed till college days.

Among the author's fine descriptive passages I note the name of Ruby Rose, that first red, white of cheeks, eyes of blue, make up the patriotic trinity, the American flag on a maiden face.

The author insisted on athletics and sports for youth. Did he join in them? Yes. And so did most American youths, who for a century on field, base and football the rivalry of those had their effect seen in our great Civil war, in the Spanish American and the First World War, in the fine physical development and the quick trained intelligence, which in the last analysis and in final conflict with those trained under other influence American youth won these wars.

* * *

The years of 1884-5-6-7 were practically all normal years as to crops, and the settlers really began to feel that they were meeting with the success hoped and worked for. During the late fall, winter and early spring of 1883-4, 1884-5, and 1885-6 I attended about six months of school each year. The school year 1884-5 D. F. Schwab, a young man but little older than I, was our teacher. He was a kindly, energetic, young man and when I expressed a desire to take bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic, he replied that he had never studied the subjects, but we could both get books and we would study them together. He secured the books, we paying for mine, and they both proved to be interesting and helpful subjects and we mastered them that winter as a side line. He was a beautiful writer, Spencerian system, and I could not make my work as neat and attractive as his but we both arrived at the same results. I have kept in touch with Mr. Schwab through the years, he being, and has been for many years, a merchant in Cambridge, Nebraska. The school year of 1885-6 was my last as a student. Seth T. Parsons, whom I have previously mentioned, was our teacher. He had been an assistant teacher in the state normal school in Indiana, came west by reason of health, and was a hard and pleasant worker and a good friend. It was my desire to review and study all subjects necessary to secure a second grade teacher's certificate, entitling me to teach in any school in the county; among its requirements were civil government, grammar, and theory and art of teaching. How I ever slipped through my school life without having studied grammar is a puzzle to me today, but I did. I secured such books as he suggested (in those days books were not furnished) and went to work in earnest. The civil government and theory and art of teaching were quickly mastered, not so the grammar. I worked hard on it all winter, home study usually every night, but just simply could not keep from getting mixed in the different parts of speech. However, I made some progress, perhaps more than I realized.

That summer I attended the county normal of two weeks and was very fortunate in having Prof. Brown of Doane College, Crete, Nebraska as our instructor in theory and art. He was a strong believer in the Martin Frobisher method of inductive teaching, this being that what the eye saw would be better understood and retained than what the ear heard. We had a delightful, helpful, instructive two weeks. I received and put into practice more from Prof. Brown than from all others combined. I was fortunate in having Prof. Webster as a contrast, who appeared sour and crusty, rarely ever smiled even in his morning greeting. Prof. Brown was the opposite, such a kindly pleasant man. I resolved to absorb as much as possible of his beautiful personality and forget Prof. Webster. All though the years Prof. Brown has been with me and Prof. Webster all but forgotten. Such is the great and lasting influence the teachers have on those they instruct.

Examination day came on Saturday following the two weeks' normal. It was the custom for each teacher in the normal to prepare the questions on the subject matter taught by him, and to receive the papers and mark the grades. We began work at eight a.m. and were to complete the examination the same day, a sizeable job. I had no fear of Prof. Brown, but oh! how I did dread getting my grades from Prof. Webster. We had two other teachers, but they don't count as I really have forgotten their names, at least they made no lasting impression on me. I felt certain after the conclusion of the examination that I would get my certificate as an average of only 75% was required. I was sure I could and would get a high rating in arithmetic and many other subjects, but felt their average would be cut through grammar and blackboard drawing. Imagine my surprise, when I received my certificate, at getting 63 in arithmetic and above 90 in grammar, both under Prof. Webster. I passed all except arithmetic and blackboard drawing in a very creditable manner, and notwithstanding my good grade in grammar, I knew I was most deficient in that subject and very good in arithmetic. Now that I had my certificate, giving me authority to teach a year in any school in the county, the next step was to get a school, as I would not try for one until I was in a lawful position to contract. Teachers' wages were $20 to $30 per month. Only one country district paid $35 per month and it was an extra large one, with the railroad to help them. I secured a three months' term, all they were to have in the school year, at $23 per month, nine miles from home, and rode horseback every day to and from school. We had nine pupils, the farthest advanced being the third reader. Uniformity of books did not come for many years, and the furnishing of books by the District not until many years after that so we had nearly as many different kinds of books as we had pupils. I busied myself by hearing and instructing each in his own books and then reciting in the same line of work together. It was really interesting and the work improved me as much as the children. The last day of school came as all last days must come and the board offered me the school with a "substantial" raise, $25 per month. I told them I preferred not to contract as I hoped to get a larger school and a six months' term. They said they would wait and perhaps I could get a school that started in December and run six months as some of them did, and then I could teach their school early in the fall. It worked out that way and I again taught their school the next fall at $25 per month, and again riding to and from school. This school closed the third week in November and I went to work at home. In a few days I received a letter from the director of district eleven – four miles east of us on the valley – to call upon him as he wanted to talk with me about teaching their school. I called on him and the facts were, they had contracted for a lady teacher and she failed to come or send word. He said if she did not come that week, I could come down Saturday and contract, the school to start the following Monday, a six months' term at $30 per month. This school is known as the Hamburgh school. I received my contract and was there early Monday morning, December, 1896, to begin the most important and responsible job of my life thus far. I will now describe the schoolhouse and the conditions under which I was to teach the largest number of pupils enrolled in any country school in the county.

The schoolhouse was of the usual sod construction, built of the native elements and similar to our previously described but with dirt floor. Two windows on each side, none in the east, and a door in the west facing the road. Situated on land owned by John L. Townley, one-fourth mile south of a post office and store named Hamburgh; thus the school became known as the Hamburgh school. The building had been in use some years and with sweeping and use such a sizeable amount of dirt had been carried out in the dust pan that it was a step down on entering the building. The seats and desks were home-made and placed with an aisle in center and as the building was about 14 feet by 30 the seats were from the door to near the teacher's small table in the east. As an added convenience, a long tier of boards was arranged along the south side for the children who could not be seated in the regulars. The books were of many authors and varieties, such as they had brought with them from their former homes. I thought, 'how could it be possible for me or anyone to teach so large a school (55 enrolled with an average attendance of 37 the full six months, many of the younger children not starting until spring) in such a crowded condition and with the variety of text books.' Well, I had contracted for the job and I threw my whole soul and energy into the organization of system into what appeared to me a chaos. Most of the parents and many of the older children were known to me and the children and young people received me very kindly. I decided to spend our first day in organizing and assigning work, placing the pupils as in my judgment most convenient, and of least disturbance in calling classes. I was then 21 years of age, several young men in attendance nearly my age and also several young ladies, all of whom, particularly among the older ones, were there for business and were ready and anxious to receive instruction in the progress of their education.

I had secured board and lodging at the store, which was of sod, with living rooms for the family of five in the rear, and my "Pullman cot" on a side counter in the store, not the most restful or desirable, but the folks, Mr. and Mrs. M. V. VanDoren, were very kind to me and did many things to make my home with them as pleasant and comfortable as possible. The second day our school moved smoothly as planned, interest in the days and weeks following grew both in teacher and pupils until I now knew that, with the handicap in facilities, we were really doing a good job. It was the general custom in those days for the teacher to visit the homes and spend the evening and night with them. I early received and accepted such invitations, refusing none, and sharing the hospitality of their homes, discussing our work with the parents and getting their feelings, thoughts and desires towards us and our school, was indeed a great help in our work. The friendliness apparent on our part and our expressed desire to be of the greatest help possible to their children so strengthened us in their regard that their influence reflected down through the work of the children. Early that winter I visited every home, and thus formed lasting friendships and whole-hearted cooperation in our work. Some of the older boys desired to take bookkeeping and as we were too crowded for time in school, and they could not remain after school by reason of home chores, I would have an evening class for them at my home in the store. In the three or four months they came that winter they were well grounded in its principals.

In those early years some teachers maintained discipline by use of the "willow," which was an exact opposite of my nature and plan. I felt, and knew from my own experience in school, that one good old-fashioned ounce of reasoning was worth an arm-load of whips. My years of teaching proved to me that this is true. An incident occurring shortly after school began is illustrative. I laid down no rules, but appealed to one and all to do the things that at all times would reflect credit on our school, and refrain from doing the things that would bring it to ill repute as, in school, we were one big family and we were naturally subject to such conduct as was for the good of all, and the success of the job was advancing our education.

The incident: The John Thompson family and the Jessup family were both large families, some of them nearly grown. On their way home they passed the store. I never knew or asked what it was all about, but they no doubt knew, for just in front of the store, Charley Thompson and Oliver Jessup had a rough and tumble fight, lasting until separated. My director, a gentleman of the old school, who was in the store at the time and witnessed the bout, told the boys he would have the teacher thrash them both good and hard. He told the storekeeper in their presence to tell me to do this, and then report to him. I got all this information all right, but made up my mind at once I would handle the matter as I thought best. The next morning, I had hardly arrived at the school house, when both boys came together. Charley seemed to be the spokesman and said, "We are sorry we had trouble, and feel much worse over it to know that we are causing you trouble. We are willing to take a good sound thrashing as the director ordered." Those great big boys were in earnest and I knew it. In looking at them I could not keep the humor of the situation out of my eyes and the corners of my mouth; they saw that too. I said, "Boys, do you think a thrashing from me would help you and do you really think it would make you better boys towards me, each other, and our school?" Before they could reply I said, "Not on your life. I will take the risk of satisfying my director and the risk of another fight. Just feel all right about this, boys, you have squared it with me." That ended all fights in that school the two years I taught it.

Spring Term.

The winter term closed with most of the older boys being required to begin the season's work on the farms. The number attending the spring term was, however, increased instead of decreased by the younger children and the arrival of two families, both being located on the C. H. Russell farms near our school.

The Ruby family came from Cass county near Plattsmouth, consisting of father, mother, and their children — Ambrose, Rosa, Edward, Anna, Howard, Louie, Maud and John — and were located near the store. The Woodring family came from Cambridge, Nebraska consisting of father, mother and their children, Ann, High, Clara, Joe, Addie and Edith. I mention these two families particularly as they became very friendly. Several in each family were grown and all of them except Ann, High, Maud and John attended our school that spring or the next school year. Clara Woodring and Rosa Ruby were both well advanced, and the desire of each was to review and get some subjects required for a Second Grade Certificate. Rosa had a third grade, but had never taught. Clara had not taken teacher's examinations in any of the subjects. As you know, my opportunity for education in school had been meager, and I feared I would not be able to do justice to the work in instructing these young ladies, Rosa 18 and Clara 17, fearing that I perhaps was the one that should be taught, especially in grammar. Here is where Prof. Brown came to my rescue. In his teaching of Theory and Art, he emphasized the fact that the teacher should only "Help the student to help himself, not to recite for him." In doing this, I drew out their ideas and by the time they, through discussion, had presented their views, I was informed and if they were wrong I could intelligently set them right. This method proved to be a "lifesaver" in my work. It was my method in all my teaching and I still believe it to be the best. "Help the student to help himself." It was tried to some extent among the older students to "stump" their teacher. They soon quit that, as under this method, it simply was not done. I heard later that some of the older ones were saying, "You just can't stump our teacher. He knows everything." I did not make any effort to set them right in this conclusion. Students must have confidence and respect for their teacher in order to do their best, and the teacher must never knowingly deceive them as to his knowledge. Many times in answer to questions, I have frankly said, "I do not know but if I can find out, and I will try, will let you know." I recall one time in the institute, or normal, as it is now called, Prof. Wm. Vallentine was one of the instructors. In a class one day, he asked the question, "What is electricity?" A young man he called on replied after some hesitation, "I have known but somehow I can't recall." Prof. Vallentine looked so sad, and said, "What a pity. The only man who has ever known, and you have forgotten." Then he gave the class a wholesome short talk on intellectual honesty. The young man was properly humiliated as he deserved to be. The spring term, I thought then, started in its work in fine shape, and as I look back over the many years since then, I knew it did and that good progress was the result of our united labors. With so many students and grades from beginners to and including the 9th, and so many different kinds of books, combination had to be made, and much of the work had to be taught by topics. This had some advantage, for in the study of different books on the same topic some of the authors brought out additional facts and thus made the subject matter more interesting and instructive. This was especially true in history and awakened a research interest in books other than the text books in use.

The Ruby family led by the father, were good singers, and with Rosa presiding at the organ often spent the evening in that manner. I, living at the store about 200 yards distant, was on many evenings an invited guest, and took part in and enjoyed the singing very much. The young men were very friendly from our first acquaintance and Rosa and Anna treated me with the friendliness and respect due a teacher from his students. The spring term was rapidly passing, all worked faithfully and well, especially Rosa and Clara as leaders in their classes. Our school being so crowded, it was my custom to insist on all pupils, at recess and noon, joining in play and exercise, in which I also took part. The object was to put new vigor into the students and fresh air into the crowded schoolroom. At first, the older ones expressed a desire to go on with their work, but after a trial on which I insisted, they got a lot of enjoyment out of the games and exercises and realized they could do and did do better work, so no time was lost.

Rosa Ruby's zeal and industry in school, her care of the smaller children in the home, who went to her with their little troubles and desires, her quiet efforts to relieve her mother who was not strong, were observed and admired by me. Near the close of the spring term, one evening at their home, this kindness was especially manifested when her little brother John was injured in his play and ran to Rosa for consolation. She was so kind and sympathetic that I thought to myself, she would make some man a good home; a wife, and mother to his children.

School closed the latter part of May with a picnic in the grove. Most of the students of the school year attended accompanied by their parents. We had a good picnic dinner after which there was a prepared program. At its close, a few of the parents discussed our year's work, which seemed to be very pleasing, and a contract was offered me for the next year with a $5 raise—$35 per month. This latter part of the program was a surprise to me, but gratefully received and appreciated as a recognition of our work. The contract was signed, school closed and for good or for ill, "finis" was written on the year's work. I was indeed happy over this contract, a manifestation of appreciation of our work and much more so, when the children and young people gathered around me and told me they were so glad I was coming back. Even shy Rosa Ruby gave me her hand and thanked me for the help I had given her. I told her that it was a pleasure to work with her and the entire school and indeed it was, and I also said to her that as she expected to attend county normal the two weeks that summer and as I also was going to attend, our relations would change and we would be classmates and if I could help her in any of her work up to that time, and during that time, I would be happy to do so.

She was blest with beautiful blue eyes, the sweetest smile, and such a kindly disposition, and having been with her in close association for three months, I was really becoming interested in her, she 18 and I 21. I called on her at home that evening and frankly told her, now that teacher and student relation was ended, I would very much like to call on her and continue our pleasant and happy association. She consented, but in that shy, retiring manner that made me feel, 'you are my teacher and I am your student.' I knew she wanted to teach, more perhaps to help her parents than just for the sake of teaching, and I really wanted to be of all the assistance I could.

Chapter XXV

Lebanon Founded as C. B. & Q. Builds Up the Beaver

Lebanon.

BEAUTIFUL name, suggesting the magnificent cedars which furnished a part of the great temple, and fits in with the author's masonic career. In the brief chapter giving the history of the town named, but really a stock history of thousands of villages and communities who started and prospered, but the grinding effect of our steel rails and laterly of our rubber tires, have failed in the larger ambitions of their early citizenship.

At this point, the writer recalls two ambitious merchants from my then home town, moved to Lebanon, James W. and Daniel Hupp, and I take this occasion to quote many who went from Fillmore county to Red Willow, Furnas, and Dundy counties, prominent among these early moving men were James W. Dolan, Venum Brothers, Charles and Fred Thompson, and many others who saw fit to move farther into the deep west.

In this chapter and others, I note the strong and bold condemnation by the author of the liquor system as established by vote and for a long time defeated in the building of that portion of the West.

* * *

This was the spring of 1887, and the Burlington & Missouri railroad was building a branch line up the Beaver Valley from Orleans which terminated at St. Francis, Kansas. Will, who now had a homestead and tree claim two miles south of the present Danbury, hired me to work his corn and he took employment with his mule team helping to grade the road bed. All team, plow and scraper work, those days — no mechanized equipment.

The first town platted on the Beaver in Red Willow county on the arrival of the Burlington railroad in 1887 was Lebanon. Mr. B. F. Bradbury and family had settled on the north side of the creek opposite where Lebanon now is, it being platted on a portion of their homestead, and the privilege of naming the town was accorded Mrs. Bradbury. Mr. and Mrs. Bradbury came to Red Willow county early in 1873, and were among the very few who came in financial comfort. They carried a sizeable herd of cattle and were good and helpful neighbors and friends. After the platting of the town, they built and occupied a beautiful home in its suburbs and were for many years identified as among its most substantial and progressive citizens. These good pioneer people have long since been called home and none of their descendants now live in the immediate vicinity. When the lots were placed on the market, a nice little town was soon in the making, with most business lines represented. Bank, lumberyard, general stores, drug stores, church, school and saloon. As the law then was, thirty freeholders could sign a petition in the precinct for a saloon and the county commissioners granted them a license on filing of the bond and paying the license fee required. Lebanon was an active, gala little town as the road was building on up the Beaver, and to help in its merry-making, an outdoor platform dance was organized and in operation a couple of times a week in afternoon and evenings. The good people of the community who had enjoyed and patronized pioneer dances in each other's homes and on picnic occasions soon saw a new element in the dance-management and operation and, with their withdrawal the season closed such merry-making and recreation. After a trial the saloon, also, soon was a thing of the past.

Lebanon grew with the years and always was a little community of which its founders could be justly proud. Its growth in its schools and churches was in keeping with its past traditions. Like other towns of that day and age, its founders are gone and their children with others are left to carry on. Since the coming of the automobile and good roads, the small town communities as we knew them are no longer regarded as formerly, and are in a state of retrogression, a distinct loss to the communities served.

Lebanon was extremely unfortunate last year (1939) in a destructive fire, which destroyed most of its substantial business houses, and stocks, and very little rebuilding has been done. To me, this is a sad decadence of what was once a very thriving and beautiful little town, a community center peopled, as is Danbury, by those who promote and stand for the best things that make life worth while.

Chapter XXVI

We Attend Institute, Continue Teaching

"WE attend Institute."

Was it not romance with institute as a practical detail?

We often hear it said, "What an apprenticeship to prepare a young man for business, law, art, medicine or ministry. He must be firm, but not crabbed, with the new human material out of which free citizenship or restrained inmates in public institutions will be made. Like the angel appearing to the young idle sculptor, "Here is the marble, there's the chisel, take them, work them to thy will. Thou alone can shape thy future, Heaven send thee strength and skill."

This chapter should be read, not dissected.

* * *

The summer soon approached August and the county institute, which was held in Indianola that year, Rosa and I attending. She stayed in a private home and I in a hotel. We had good instructors and we both enjoyed the work very much. Examination day for certificates came on Saturday following the 2 weeks institute. The evening before I called on Rosa, as I had noticed that she seemed worried as to results. I told her we must both forget books, take a walk in the pure fresh air to clear our minds of the work and prepare us for a good night's rest and sleep, then we would both go through the examination with colors flying. We had a delightful evening, in our walk and in the home on returning. I left in good time, telling her to forget tomorrow, get a good night's rest and if she must think to think of me, I was worth it. This was pleasantry on my part designed to give her something else to think about. On her part she, as I felt, again manifested that shy, retiring yet very friendly student-teacher attitude. We met about 7:30 the next morning at the schoolhouse. After greetings I asked, "How did you rest last night?" She replied, "Oh, teacher, just splendid. I feel thoroughly refreshed and thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and kindness, for it was a kindness. I would probably have worked until midnight. I now am ready for the examinations." I replied, "Good for you, Rosa, I also am with you, but where do you get that teacher stuff. We are classmates and as such we are both going to make good now. Give me that smile and banish care. Write only as you know and make no guesses." The day wore on, it was a big job for one day, but we did the job. When finished, I knew by her countenance she realized that her certificate was in the making. Rosa and Dick Green, father of John Green, Wauneta, Nebr., were the only two in the examination in orthography who correctly spelled "supersede." We both received our certificates and as my three months' school started the following Monday, a week early so that I could be at Hamburgh on Dec. 1, I received my certificate that evening. Rosa's was mailed to her later.

When I received mine and called on her that evening she asked if she might see it. I handed it to her. After reading it and noticing that the markings were many in the 100 class she looked up in that same student attitude and said, "Teacher, this is simply grand." I told her, "There you go again, if you don't quit that teacher stuff and that teacher attitude I will not come to see you Sunday; now smile." She did and said, "I will be home Sunday and am anxious to know how your second year starts off in the same school." Of course she saw me Sunday and seemed more concerned in showing me her certificate than in hearing of my work. She had a very good average, as I was sure she would, if not worn out and distressed before examination. She contracted a six months' school about four miles from home and this gave her week-ends at home, to the delight of her family and herself. Her school began with fall term, whereas Hamburgh had winter and spring term, so her school was half out when mine began at Hamburgh. She had about 15 or 20 pupils, some nearly grown and I know her work was appreciated by all concerned; she was offered the school for the next year. As the older girls of the family were in our school, Rosa remained at home after finishing her school work to relieve and help her mother.

I had a larger number of pupils in District 44 than the fall before and the work was more interesting, both to myself and pupils. The three months passed quickly, and the school closed with many of the parents present. I was again offered the school for the next fall, but while I enjoyed the work, I felt they could now have four or more months and should not start their school out of time to accommodate me, so I gave my good friendly board no encouragement of my ultimate acceptance.

My second term at the Hamburgh school began the first week in December, 1887, under the same crowded conditions, the same similarity in variety of textbooks, but with this difference: we were our own successors. The school being well organized, teacher and pupils started off the first day as a continuation of the former term. More grown young men attended, among whom were the Ruby boys. Charlie Hayward, a young man about twenty, walked four miles each morning and night to get the benefit of the winter term in subjects not taught in his home school. It was a delightful, happy and exacting year's work. The older ones, who like myself had only the meager opportunity of the early days, were indeed in earnest, worked hard and, for many, this was their last term. I gave them the subjects desired, and put in many overtime hours with the advanced students before school, after school, and some evenings. Their interest and industry was superb and I felt fully compensated in their progress and gratitude.

Again living almost in the same dooryard with the Ruby family and being in their home at least one evening a week and meeting Rosa often, my interest in her grew into such a pure and holy love, that I did not want to vision my future without her. Her industry, her thoughtfulness and kindliness to her family and others, her beauty and purity of soul, all appealed to me so strongly that I knew I wanted her for my wife, and partner, until "Death do us part." While she was always very gracious and kind to me, always seemed pleased to meet me, and at times I thought her smile and the twinkle in her eyes, though shy, disclosed some love for me, yet I was uncertain as to her love and very desirous of knowing if she cared for me in the manner I did for her. I decided to tell her just how I felt and that I wanted her to be my wife and life's partner at some future time that she might name. My mind fully made up, I was not long in creating an opportunity and talk about "thrills!" I received the happiest and the most lasting thrill of my life and it is still with me. We both were so happy we could not restrain our tears, it was such a heart-felt, soul-depth occasion in the expression of our mutual love and trust. When composed she said to me, "Forster, I never was so happy in my life." She then explained that she had feared to in any way show her love to and for me, not knowing but my interest in her might be purely a companionable one, and that of teacher and student relation. We, in God's holy love, promised each other to be married but she said nothing about the time. This was early in April, 1888 before the close of our school in May. Millions of folks have experienced the same holy love and trust we did and know of its happiness, too sacred to attempt to chronicle.

Our school closed with a picnic dinner and program and I was again offered the school, this time at $40 for they said that the railroad would make this raise possible. This time I had other plans in mind, so could not accept. It, to me and pupils, was a sad parting; I had learned to love them as members of one family and the memory of those two years is still very precious to me.

The railroad, as stated, was building up the Beaver Valley and platted a town about a mile east of our schoolhouse in which I attended school, District No. 12. This necessitated a reorganization of District No. 12 and the formation of a new school district within its confines, it being very large. In the new organization, old District 12 retained its number, but built their new school house one and a half miles east and one mile north of the old location, as being more centrally located. The new school house was a frame house, good seats, desks and equipment with blackboard painted on the north, south, east and west walls at my request. Mr. W. T. Henton was the director, and some time before the close of the Hamburgh school, asked me to teach their school eight months at $35 per month. As this was my home school, a number of the large boys and girls and I having been schoolmates, I hesitated, thinking this fact might preclude the best work, and so expressed myself. Mr. Henton said he had anticipated I might object by reason of this and had talked with them and they wanted me. This being the case I agreed to teach the school. Hence the other plans. There were two reasons for the change. One, my father, some years previous, had purchased a tree claim for me, three-fourths of a mile from our home, this I homesteaded when becoming of age, and I hoped to be married during the year. Later, Rosa and I decided on Christmas day. The other reason, the school was only about two miles distant from my home-to-be, and the better facilities with which to work. I farmed some land on my homestead that summer, adding about forty acres of new breaking to the farm land, and raised some crop, a pretty good crop year. That fall Will and I built a two room sod house with sod partition, all walls two feet thick, the roof being of 2 x 10 stringers on which boards were nailed and tar paper and sod on the boards. A window in the south, a door and two windows in the east and west. House standing north and south. A floor in the south room, which was kitchen and living-room, and a dirt floor in the north room with rag carpet nailed down in the usual manner. Rosa prepared the rags for weaving the carpet. The rooms were 12 x 14 each in size and a very comfortable, cozy little home it later made for us, by the hands and presence of my wife, companion and life partner. I also had a well drilled 100 feet to water, and we built a sod stable sufficient for team and two cows. This work completed, it was schooltime and I, on the first week in September, began my first year's work as teacher in School District 12, our home school, with an enrollment of about 35. I lived at home that fall most of the time with my parents, until married. My older pupils would often ask me, "When are you going to be married?" I always replied, "Christmas." Of course they thought I was joking.

A few years prior to the coming of the railroad, a town called Danbury was platted on land owned by Jesse Ashton three miles west of the present Danbury. It had a general store, a hardware, drug store, hotel, blacksmith shop, post office and for a short time a resident doctor. With the coming of the railroad and the new town platted, the old town except the hotel moved down to the new location. A lumber yard, hotel, two more general stores, a meat market, another drug store, M. E. Church, school and saloon were soon added, also a bank, two resident physicians and fraternal organizations, such as the Masons, G.A.R., Women's Relief Corps, Woodmen, The Workmen, and their auxiliaries. All within a year. With the building of the railroad and its towns, the old west and frontier as we knew it was gone and we were to experience a new and different era. This era in many ways was greatly appreciated, but it also brought problems of a nature which many of us bitterly opposed, chief of which was the saloon. It was there only a very few years until it was permanently banished.

The Ruby family owned a farm one mile south of the new Danbury and in the early spring of 1888 built a sod house of the usual design, stable and other buildings, and moved to their new home. With ox team and horses, they broke some of the land and rented some nearby cultivated land. Three of the boys were practically grown, so as needed, they assisted the father in his farming operations. Rosa and Anna remained at home until school began in September, when Anna again attended school, this time in town.

We named our school "White Hall" by reason of its beautiful white appearance, as contrasted with the sod schoolhouses of that early day. Our books were more uniform, the pupils very industrious and nice to us. The parents fully cooperated and school started off in a very satisfactory manner. Some of the older ones desired a few subjects lacking in their education thus far and these were given, to their great appreciation. Anticipating some in the story of our first year in that school, it was a very pleasant and profitable school year and when the school closed I was again hired for the next year at $40 per month, an eight months' term.

School was half out and a vacation of one week was planned during the week of the Christmas holiday.

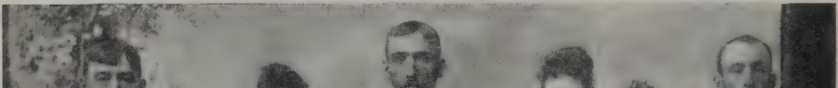
Chapter XXVII

My Marriage in 1888

MARRIAGE. Sequel of Institute. The fine manly sentiments of the author, groom, might well be read by single men with intentions and prospects of matrimonial achievement. Might well be read as a reminiscence of those who count their age by decades.

He was a boy, who honored and obeyed his parents. He was single hearted to his lover. He was devoted to his wife and does

A picture of my wife's family, John W. Ruby, taken about the year 1891, judging by the size of little Johnnie.



Reading from right to left, standing: Ambrose, Rosa, Edward, Annie and Howard. *Standing and seated*: Louie, Mother Sarah E., John W., Jr., Father John W. and Maud.

not hesitate to express his wholesome and noble sentiments in his choicest English. Too many dissemble their feelings and sentiments both in voice and pen.

The tribute to the Burlington and the county's seat and metropolis indicates Red Willow leadership, and people fight vigorously in their contests, but are no bearers of grudges and nurse no feuds.

The account of their notable G.A.R. Reunion now almost a reminiscence is expressed in touching admiration for the saviours of our Union. They were the ultimate units, grander than the Greeks, nobler than the Romans. And by reunion or by writing, by speech or the press, the memory of these heroes should be kept alive, not for this year or the next, but for the centuries as they come and go.

* * *

Preparations went forward in the Ruby home for the anticipated event on Christmas day, Rosa buying the material and making her own wedding dress. It was nice in material and workmanship and I was indeed proud that she did the work. Mr. and Mrs. Ruby had invited my family of seven at home, also several of our immediate relatives. In all over thirty were present. Rosa, so I learned afterward from her mother, had baked the cakes and pies herself, and on the morning of our wedding, had risen early and prepared the turkey for roasting and done a number of things necessary in the starting of the preparation of such a dinner as we had that day. The wedding was to be at twelve noon, and I arrived at about eleven—wanted to be on time you know—and did she look good to me when prepared for our marriage. I silently prayed that I could always be worthy of this dear pure girl. She was twenty and I twenty-three. We were married on Tuesday, December 25, 1883 by a minister we both loved, thus putting the seal of God and man on the union of hearts and souls, that were joined in God's holy love. The dinner was excellent, all were served in plenty and in early afternoon the guests returned to their homes. Rosa and I had planed to go to our home that evening, about three miles distant. My brother Solomon, who acted as my best man, left early to build the fires and have the home comfortable for our home-coming. About 3:30 p.m., with team and wagon, we bid her family goodbye and were on our way. My brother met us in the yard and said for us to go into the house and he would care for the team. Thus, our life's journey began which lasted over fifty-one years, a journey with one of the sweetest and best life's partners God has ever given to man. She was my ideal all through her life, of wife and mother, in all things the words imply.

My parents had built a frame house that fall, and it was completed and ready to move into about a week before we were married. Mother said to me, "Forster, we want to have a dinner and some guests on Wednesday for Rosa and you. Where would you prefer it to be, in the old house or the new?" I replied, "Mother, if agreeable to you and father I much prefer to have it in the old sod home, where I grew up, where we had so many good meals of your cooking and so many happy years together. Mother said, with tears in her eyes, "Forster, I was in hopes you would want it in the old home and I thought you would." We spent Wednesday with my family and their guests, Rosa helping with the dinner, a good dinner and a nice time. However, as in the day before, there was a hidden touch of sadness in the breaking of home ties. We urged the folks to move to their new home in the same yard on Thursday—the next day. Will, Rosa and I helped them in the moving.

I have often thought, when hearing the "mother-in-law" gags, what a pity that normal human beings will indulge in such undignified, inhuman "pleasantries." First of all, a mother-in-law is a mother and is usually loved and respected as such. I know it was 100 per cent true in the case of Rosa and I. Each was loved and treated as a son and daughter in the respective families, and this love and respect grew with the years. The mother-in-law jokes are disgusting to the finer sensibilities of best thought and should no longer be laughed at or tolerated.

I early believed that if young married folks not only became husband and wife, but became frankly partners as well in the beginning of life's new relations that it would do much towards a happy marital life. My later business life and close association with folks confirms this belief. Prior to the setting of the date of our marriage, in a heart-to-heart talk with Rosa, I told her frankly the total of my assets, which were meager, and of what they consisted, and of my debts, which were plenty, and to whom owing. I also outlined my plans and hopes for the future and suggested there would no doubt be privations and sacrifices, that I had only one regret and that was that I was just getting a start and could not financially do by her as I would like. She replied that a dugout with me would be worth more to her than a palace and all things kindred to it without me. She never got over the dugout idea and met every problem of life with a philosophy truly beautiful.

The coming of the Burlington railroad in the Republican Valley in 1880-1882 ushered in a new and changed era, and the coming of the railroad in the Beaver Valley ushered in a new and changed condition, by furnishing us transportation so badly needed and facilitating the building of its towns, assisting in financially supporting its schools and strengthening its communities.

The formative period of southwestern Nebraska now being passed, the foundations were laid in all things dear to the hearts of the pioneers, among which were homes, churches, schools, transportation and the various civil governments. The new era will naturally be one of progress, change and development in which, the greater part of our lives, I had an active part as a teacher, public man and banker. It is my purpose to write of the high lights of that growth and development which in general was common to and affected us all, as well as to touch on some of the passing events intimately touching our lives. Those intimate and personal things that make up life, common to us all, yet different.

After the Christmas vacation and our marriage, school days again and for quite a number of the older students that winter we knew this school would be their last—one a teacher and a few others in life's work. Our home was made cozy and homelike with our meager furnishings, and had the quality of all homes of sod construction of being warm in winter and cool in summer. Rosa entered whole-heartedly into the partnership, and our life was indeed a contented and happy one. I signed a contract to succeed myself the following fall and was happy to do so, as our work had been jointly very pleasant and profitable. I farmed the summer of 1889; Rosa planted and raised a good garden which was very helpful. She also had a nice flower garden, supplementing nature with water she carried from our well. We both loved flowers, which often through the years added beauty to our home. My field crops were good and potatoes in plenty for our use and some to dispose of, but price hardly worth the digging and hauling to town, so I gave them to my neighbors who had failed in raising them, and this had one merit—it saved me the digging. Corn was good but price twelve to thirteen cents per bushel, owing to quality, and after hauling a load of corn to town and buying coal, the quantity of coal was so small Rosa and I decided as a matter of economy to burn corn, and keep the coal for the worst storms, which we did, and secured good results with less cost.

That fall, McCook having grown into a thriving railroad center, the country apparently prosperous with good crops, the business men decided to have a "Civil War Veterans' Reunion" and while sponsored and financed by the business men of McCook it was under the auspices of the G.A.R. organization of Red Willow county. There were many veterans of the Civil War in the towns and as homesteaders and they, in connection with McCook, planned to reach out beyond the confines of Red Willow county and make it a Southwest Nebraska and Northwest Kansas reunion. A few soldiers of the U. S. regular army were in attendance, among whom was General Alexander McDowell McCook, in honor of whom the city of McCook received its name. They also secured the attendance of a company of the State Militia, bringing two field cannon with it. This reunion was widely advertised; speakers of reputation who were members of the G.A.R. were secured. In the early fall, a Tent City under army regulations was erected west of McCook, now part of McCook, and wood, water and tents were furnished free to those desiring to camp.

The McCook band and the Danbury band, of which Will and I were members, and the Tubbs Drum Corps composed of a family of homesteaders, were in attendance during the three-day reunion and furnished the music. It was indeed a patriotic and colorful occasion. The flags and bunting decorated the stores, the streets and the Tent City. The State Guard and most of the G.A.R. in blue uniforms, the state soldiery in action in sham battle, the speeches and talks, public and private, the great affection expressed and implied by the G.A.R. for each other, made a lasting impression on me of patriotism, comradeship and sacrifice. It was indeed a large and costly affair for the town of McCook, being largely attended, but they did not waiver as hosts, either in their time or expense. Only a few men are now living in McCook who were party to this magnificent and enjoyable occasion, and none of the G.A.R.

Colonel H. P. Sutton, organizer, instructor and leader of the McCook band, is still in business at the "old stand" on main street and is especially revered by all music-lovers of McCook for the foundations he built of all that is wholesome and good in music. I quote from the McCook Daily Gazette of June 18, 1932, it being the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the city of McCook: "Looking back almost a half century McCook has been recognized as a community where music has been one of the outstanding accomplishments of the people. This fact, no doubt, is due in a large measure to Col. H. P. Sutton, who during the early '90's organized a band, which from that time up until recent years, was recognized throughout the United States as one of the finest musical organizations in the country."

Many similar tributes can be paid with propriety to the McCook business men of that day in their line. They were a forward-looking, progressive bunch of fellows, united in their zeal in the upbuilding of the city of their adoption, in all things wholesome and good. The generation now living are reaping the ripened fruits of their labors and unity of effort. May their spirit of progress by which they have been so greatly benefited, be passed on in kind by this generation to their successors. I have often admired and continue to admire the motto carried as a headline in the McCook Daily Gazette and on the building erected for its home. I quote, "Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy in this world." For without service, there can be no progress.

Chapter XXVIII

My Brother Will's Marriage in 1889
School Teaching and Farming Continues for Me

ON THE third day of October, 1889, my brother Will and Annie Burbridge were married in a sod house, the home of her father. Annie and I were school and classmates the last two years in school, and both were teachers up to the year of her marriage. As Will and I had so much in common as we grew up, such love and affection for each other, we had often said that we hoped when the time came and we were married that our wives could and would reciprocate such love and affection for each other. In this hope we were indeed fortunate, for sisters of the same family could not have been more congenial, or manifested greater love and helpfulness to each other and the families of each. This love and affection grew with the passing years. Will and Annie began their homemaking on his homestead in a sod house of his construction and he made farming his life's work and prospered with the passing years, Annie doing her full part in the labor allotted to the homemaker of those days. Over the years, they added a half section to the homestead and timber claim he had when married, and still own them, and also purchased from the heirs our father's homestead on the valley, where they are now living and rounding out a happy contented sunset of life with the presence of each other.

I have so often referred to Will in this writing, that I could not pass the most important event in his life without special mention, or pause to pay a tribute of love and affection for the splendid little lady who became his wife and companion, his helpmate and mother of his children.

My second term of school in "White Hall" began in September, 1889. Some of the older ones had finished but, with new additions, there was as large a school in numbers as the year before.

All the seats were occupied, there was more uniformity of books, and teacher and students were united, backed by the parents, in the desire to accomplish a good year's work. The work moved on as planned, a continuation of the year before, and good results were obtained, as is usual when all parties concerned work in unison and harmony for the results to be desired. The attitude of the parents toward the teacher and school is so definitely manifested in the attitude of the pupils that a teacher knows when full cooperation is not given. It was always my purpose and practice when I felt that there was something lacking on the part of the parents, as reflected through the pupil, to call on the parents and frankly go into the problem and iron it out. This resulted in a fuller understanding and cooperation. To illustrate, I had a boy who felt he knew so much more than the rest of the class that he was constantly "butting" in and reciting for them until, one day, I refused to let him come to class or recite at all, thinking this might have a salutary influence on him. Then when calling on his parents, they were inclined to feel the boy was abused and frankly said so, that I was holding him back and would not even let him recite. After this information, I asked that the boy might be summoned in to our presence before we continued. He was called, being a boy about 13, and in the presence of his parents I told him what they had said—that I would not let him recite that day, and I also told him that he told the truth. I then asked him to tell them why, and if he did not I would. I had him on the spot. He was honest, told the truth, and there was no further trouble experienced with him or his parents.

Another instance will suffice as to my difficulties, which were few, and methods of handling them. A girl about 16 had taken off her ring and laid it on her desk; she sat on the back seat. Two girls about 12 and 14 sat just in front of her. The 16-year-old, with others, was called for class. On her return to her seat she missed the ring, and noticing that it was gone, immediately came to my desk and very quietly told me in a whisper what had happened. I cautioned her to mention the matter to no one and I felt sure I could recover it. While she was at my desk, I noticed the older girl grew very much embarrassed and this to some extent convinced me that she had taken it. When I dismissed school for the evening, I asked the 14-year-old girl to remain with me for a short time after dismissal as I desired a private talk with her. I had held others in the same manner for private interviews, usually only a few moments, so nothing was thought of this against her, as I knew. The school filed out and when we were alone I walked back to her desk and asked her for the ring. She hesitated quite a bit and finally said, "I haven't got it." Doing my best I could not get her to give it to me or confess, but in the interview I knew she had it. I told her I would let her go, as did not want to use force in searching her, but would think it over and decide what to do the next morning, for I knew she had it—of this fact I had become thoroughly convinced. I also told her it was not my desire to injure her character or standing, but to save her from public disgrace, and the matter would go no further if she would give me the ring and I knew the 16-year-old would say nothing. Still no ring surrendered and she was permitted to go home.

Before the opening of school the next morning the 16-year-old came to me, showed me the ring and a note from the girl's mother. I cautioned her again to say nothing now or ever, as neither she nor I wanted to hurt the girl, but save her if we could. She agreed and I am sure she faithfully kept the compact. The note to the 16-year-old was a scathing of me in no uncertain language. It was so severe it made me just plain mad, for a short time. I had it in my mind all day, and finally decided to write a note and seal it and ask the girl to carry it to her mother, and that I expected an answer the next morning or I would go home with her and see her mother. Her mother's note to the 16-year-old said she had told her mother that she found the ring on the road home, where perhaps it had been lost and I had accused her of stealing it, and so forth. Well, in my note to the mother, I told her I knew the girl had taken it, and named the actions of the girl for my reason; that the 16-year-old would say nothing, so promising me, and I had now but one object, to help the mother to save the girl and not brand her a thief. Perhaps only a thoughtless childish desire. A full explanation of the problem was given and that I would call on her soon.

It was my custom to sweep and clean up, and place some work on the blackboard for the next day, so pupils were gone some little time before I left. On arriving home, I saw a man coming to my home across the prairie from the direction of her mother's home. The man was her father, so I met him near my stable, and he reached out his hand and said he wanted to thank me for what I did for their girl, and his wife would thank me and apologize, as she had told him of the letter she had written. He also said he read my note, the girl had fully confessed of having taken the ring, and he believed she had a very severe lesson in self-remorse. I was indeed happy over such an ending. I am sure this was kept between her family, the 16-year-old and myself. I had a good talk with the girl and I am sure she never fell again. We worked on together as if nothing had ever happened. She grew to womanhood in the community and made a good wife and mother and was thus helped to recover and retain her self-respect. After all, perhaps only a childish immature desire to have a ring. To me the sequel was happy—a soul was saved.

The first half of the school year 1889-90 was rapidly drawing to a close and the Christmas vacation was at hand. On Christmas day 1888 we were married, and now were to receive a Christmas present, for a blue-eyed baby boy came to our home Dec. 24, 1889, bringing his own little bundle of love and joy with him. He timed his coming just right when I, always a lover of children, could be home with and watch him stretch and grow. We named him Solomon Wesley after both our parents, my father being Solomon and Rosa's father Wesley, and for short, we just called him S.W. The custom of the community being to call so many folks by their initials. Our love for our child was only augmented by our love for each other. He was a happy addition to our home. School time came again and the next four months passed rapidly, and closed with a last day program as was customary in that community. I was again offered the school and accepted. I again farmed during the season of 1890 which was a very dry year, the least rainfall ever experienced in southwestern Nebraska up to that time, and all crops on the divides were a failure except feed crops. It was just mighty tough on the families in general and on some it was financial ruination. Many left, never to return, others left for work and later returned. A good many families borrowed money from the loan companies on their farms, some had previously mortgaged their farms and did not have this resource. The divide folks were just simply hard up in the fall, and winter coming on.

My school began in September and when my first order of that term was issued, we discovered no levy for taxes had been made. Thus I was paid in orders on a blank treasury. I had thought that we personally were sitting pretty, but with this condition we were in line with the rest of the divide in lack of income. Philip Gliem, our merchant with whom we traded, took a school order for goods and agreed to take another. The bank could not buy them for, with the crop failure, it had its hands full to keep up its reserve and made no new loans.

In the November, 1890, election W. T. Henton was elected county treasurer and after his election, he wanted me for his deputy as he did not want to move to Indianola from his farm until the next fall. I liked teaching and indoor work, always thought I would like to get into a bank and felt this might be a stepping stone to such a position. I talked it over with Rosa, and she insisted on me doing what I felt to be best for us. She knew she would need to hold down, or live on, the homestead until the 5th of July next, so we could prove up and get our patent. This required about six months, me home only on Sundays, she with me was doing her bit.

As Christmas vacation was drawing near, I called my board and patrons to the school house and told them I would like to resign and why. Had they money, I would not have considered resigning but I had a family and it must come first. I also knew of a substitute teacher they could get, and they graciously voted to let me off. I did this with much regret but thought it necessary and best for us, and so it ultimately proved. I employed my wife's brother to be with her and do the work and farming and, as her health was far from good, a girl to help her,

Chapter XXIX

Public Office

A DEPUTY County Treasurer with chief in general absention on January 1, 1891, was a major risk to all who remember the dark drought days of 1890. The sun had burned, the dust covered nearly every green thing, these green things died, loans were called, credits vanished, creditors sued, certain levies overlooked and yet the ambitious deputy must stand between the public and taxpayer, and so conduct the office, that in what proved popular, credit must go to the chief, and what failures there might be blame must attach to the deputy and to add to all the Demopops carried the elections. Add to all this, the distribution of aid with modesty on the one hand, and inordinate greed on the other. "Uneasy lies the crowned head, and palsied the charity distributing hand." It was a period of Stickers and Quitters. The former made the West. It was here that my early Fillmore and Salina counties friends James W. Dolan and L. E. Southwick and the writer met.

* * *

Early in January, 1891, I became Deputy County Treasurer of Red Willow county in charge of the office. It was a hard, unpleasant job. The crop failure caused default in the payment of taxes by nearly all the country folks and many of the business houses and folks in the towns. Money provided or arranged for through taxation being not forthcoming, county, local and school governments were in default in their obligations. On the one hand, I was importuned to collect the taxes, and on the other hand, distress warrants issued on their personal property would have been ruination to so many, and in the long pull not advisable or necessary. I took this matter up with the commissioners and they agreed with me. The deeded land was advertised to be sold as required by law for the tax delinquent and while it added, when sold, some little expense and excess interest penalty, it did not molest the owners in the possession of and use of their property, as distress warrants in the collection of the tax on personal property would have done.

The drouth and crop failure was not over the entire state, but mainly in western Nebraska. The commissioners, by virtue of their office being responsible in helping the distressed, soon saw their treasury depleted and further help practically impossible. The legislature made an appropriation for the purchase of groceries, meat, and flour, and this was distributed through the county commissioners in a vacant store building in Indianola with the county clerk and county treasurer in charge. Each person applying for this help needed to make a sworn statement as to his crops, if any, the facilities he had to help himself, and size and number of his family, then sign a receipt for goods obtained.

The clerk and treasurer handled this unpleasant job only one Saturday and then wished it on their deputies, Albert Barnes and me. This distribution of assistance (aid, as it was called then) began in early February, being augmented by private eastern donations, and continued until early spring. It surely brought to my notice traits of character which at that time I had never been in contact with. We soon found that many of the most needy, and in some cases distressingly so, never came near us. These were taken care of, when known, through order on us by the county commissioners. Others, who could get by, as a large majority of our people similarly situated did, were clamorous to receive large portions and indignant and ready to fight when cut down on quantity or refused. It is just the same old story, "Something for nothing." By some gratefully received with thanks and a trace of tears in their eyes, and others cruel and selfish in their desires. It has always been my belief that, with the few really distressed and needy cared for by the county commissioners, had the rest lived as we did in the earlier days and husbanded their resources, this help would have been unnecessary. It was true then and is true now, that when people call for assistance and from their statements are unable to go on without it, they must be cared for even if this provision gives them better food and variety than those furnishing it have in their own homes and on their own tables, that the real needy and distressed may not suffer for lack of food, for it is impossible to judge and define the true dividing line. With the coming of spring, help was discontinued and in some way "The Lord did provide" when given a chance.

It was Mr. Henton's practice to be in the office on Saturdays and as needed on other week days. This service and the records kept of the distribution added greatly to our work, all without compensation. In the spring of 1891, rains were frequent and plentiful and bid fair for a good crop. No corn, or very little corn for feed, so we "grassed" in the crops that year, horses were poor by finishing time but there was a good crop generally produced and again we were back to normal. We proved up on our homestead and moved to Indianola in July, Mr. Henton moving there in August. Now that we were both on the job my long hours were shortened and the work was enjoyed by us both. With Rosa, our boy and me again at home together.

We were indeed happy in the new and final arrangement, for I never again through her life permitted my work or places of employment to be such that we were not united and in our home, rented or owned. She was a "good sport," never complained, and fully carried out the "Spirit of the West," which was part of her philosophy all through her life. I wish it were possible for me in this writing to bring to the understanding of the reader the beauty and character of her soul, her intelligent and sympathetic understanding when discussing our problems, her counsel and helpful suggestions and finally her unswerving cooperation in the decisions taken, but I cannot for that can only be lived to realize and understand. She was indeed one of God's choicest gifts to man and the men receiving such gifts are indeed fortunate and, while they may be poor in the accumulation of property, they are rich in the greatest and best things that really count and that is a loving, companionable wife, children and home.

In November, 1891, a dear little girl was a happy addition to our home and was welcomed by father, mother and brother. As we named our boy after our fathers, we named her after our mothers, Elizabeth Ella, both of our mothers bearing the name Elizabeth. We called her Lizzie, and a dear sweet child she grew to be. The people generally being prosperous through good crops and fair prices, taxes current and delinquent began to be paid and Mr. Henton and I spent a very busy winter in receiving and paying out the money. The commissioners were very frugal and careful in their expenditures following the crop failure of 1890 and as a result no warrants were registered on the county and, with the paying of taxes following the 1891 crop, funds were on hand and many needed improvements were made. The county commissioners of that time were C. W. Hodgkin succeeded by Samuel Young, Stephen Bolles and Samuel Graham. I mention these men for I now feel as I look back to that time and review their administration that they performed their responsibility, wisely and well. They were all men of experience, past middle age, and handled the business of the county with the same care and fidelity as they would and did their own. One thing that was of great assistance to the county in that trying period was the tax paid by the Burlington railroad on its lines up the Republican and Beaver. This, supplemented by the larger taxpayers of the towns and country, made it possible to get over without the registration of warrants.

Many homesteaders in the middle and late 80's had mortgaged their farms. I think some had no intention to pay or redeem as they soon left and thus realized a few hundred dollars, usual sums loaned being $300 to $800 per quarter. As interest and taxes were in default foreclosures were carried through and many eastern investors became the unwilling owners of southwestern Nebraska land, they coming into possession in 1889, 1890, and 1891. With results of the good crops of 1891 and 1892 much of this land was sold to new settlers with some cash and in some instances giving a mortgage back to the holder for a portion of the purchase price, and such purchase price usually being the sum of the mortgage but in many instances less.

About the first of March, 1892, Mr. J. W. Dolan, the president of the State Bank, Indianola, Nebraska, also the president of the Bank of Bartley, suggested to his cashier of the Bank of Bartley that he might secure me to take the place of his assistant cashier who was leaving to take a position as cashier in a Missouri bank. Mr. Dolan knew I had desired employment when the bank was organized but, at that time, employment was all taken by the investors. Mr. Frost, the cashier came to the courthouse and laid his proposition before me. I told him I would let him know in a few days, which seemed agreeable. He desired me to be on the job March 9 as his man was leaving at that time. I wanted to talk the matter over fully with Mr. Dolan from several angles, particularly as to the possible future of the business as I knew the territory was small—Indianola seven miles west and Cambridge eight miles east, both with established banks of ten to twelve years' standing which no doubt had secured and held customers within the Bartley territory. Mr. Dolan agreed this to be true but said he was confident if I took the job that in time I would get the business in the territory and that he believed there was a future growth for the bank, the town and the territory it served. My wages for the first year were to be $40 per month as I was wholly inexperienced in the work, and the next year were to be $50 per month. The cashier, Mr. Frost, was getting $50 per month. This was going down the scale of income from $65 per month to $40 but in a line I wanted and the job had an apparent permanency. Rosa and I figured the opportunity from every standpoint and we decided to make the move. Before moving, as I was the bookkeeper, I desired to post and close the books up to March first and thereby close my record. Mr. Henton secured a young man to take my place for much less than he was paying me, which was to his advantage. Closing and balancing the books made a lot of work but it had two advantages — it left a closing record of my work, and helped the young man get familiar with the routine and books. This young man was a neighbor boy and had taken bookkeeping in my school some years before and was familiar with debits and credits so quickly acquired a knowledge of the requirements of the job. The books all posted and balanced and balances brought down for a new start, I resigned my first and last job in a political office and I feel it only the right thing to do in paying a tribute to W. T. Henton, who has long since passed away, by saying he was a prince to work for and with, always obliging and square, sympathetic and conscientious in his position and responsibility.

Bartley.

In the farm to market days of ox team, horses, mules and wagon transportation, it was the custom of the railroads to establish towns at convenient intervals, six to seven miles distant from each other. In doing this, it made additional expense to the railroads, as starting and stopping trains added to costs in loss of time and fuel consumption, but added greatly to the convenience of its customers.

The Lincoln Land Company, a company organized and owned by some of the Burlington railroad officials for the purpose of establishing towns along its right of way, had early in 1873 acquired a beautiful tract of table land, section six, township three, range twenty-six, about midway between Cambridge and Indianola, a distance of approximately 15 miles. The company also acquired a half section adjoining south of this tract. For some reason when the road was built to Indianola in 1880, the company did not establish a town on this tract. This, to some extent, brought forth the thought that it was reserving this tract for a division point. However, such conjectures were disspelled when McCook received the coveted prize. This tract lay in virgin prairie until the year 1886, when Rev. Allen Bartley and his widowed sister, Mrs. Alley, acquired 320 acres adjoining this section six on the west. It was Mr. Bartley's idea and desire to establish a Methodist College on this tract, section six, and no doubt he had encouragement from others who, like him, were of much zeal and very little money. He acquired the section by purchase on contract for a deed from the Lincoln Land Company, and as lots were sold, the company was to release the title to that portion sold. This on the College part of it, the north half of section six. The original town was platted on the southwest quarter of section six for which he paid and received title, naming the town "Bartley." The town was laid out, including the College part, with broad streets and avenues and the location of the college was in the center of a forty acre tract in the south center of the northwest quarter. This campus was surrounded with 120 foot avenues, bordering which were blocks of resident properties, covering the balance of the quarter. In addition to this half section being platted in this manner, Springdale Park addition and Esther Park addition were platted with two rows of blocks on the east side increasing to acreage plots to several acres in extent as outlying residence tracts on the half section adjoining on the west.

The plat was recorded in June, 1886, and thus Bartley was launched as a college town-to-be. Sale of lots was quite brisk on the start, both business and residence, and some substantial business houses and residences were erected. A brick yard was started nearby and out of its production two brick residences and two business houses were erected. One business house had two store-rooms below and an assembly room and two class rooms above on the second floor. The other had a store-room and a banking room on the ground floor and class rooms on the upper floor. The College was called Mallalien University, being named after Bishop Mallalien. The assembly room was named Haddock Hall in honor of a gentleman named Haddock who gave towards the furtherance of the school. A large two-story frame dormitory was built and the school started with Chancellor Thompson in charge and Professors Peck, Watts, Smith and Fletcher in the faculty. The cornerstone of Mallalien University was laid on the completed brick basement, stone similar to the cornerstone surrounded the building, the rough floor laid, and then the building ceased for lack of funds, never to be resumed.

The school operated for a few years, helping many young men and women in their progress in music and higher education, then it, too, ceased for lack of funds. It was in this University that the Rev. Porter C. Johnson, the then District Superintendent, received the honorary degree D.D. from Chancellor Thompson. Reverend Johnson was in every way worthy of this distinction. Rev. Allen Bartley, in his zeal to help in the education and Christian character-building of the young people in this University, placed the prohibitive clause in deeds issued, that no liquor should be kept or vices of any kind to in any way corrupt their morals on penalty or forfeiting title, was indeed Christlike. In his business acumen he was greatly lacking, and I have often wondered why successful business men, by which the Lincoln Land Company was officered, could not foresee the ultimate failure of such a sizeable venture, in the then new and unstable country. It broke Mr. Bartley financially and the company recovered their property through the courts. The Methodist church organization at Bartley purchased the foundation and built their present church in the early 1900's. Thus part of Mr. Bartley's dream came true, material he once paid for being used in Christian education.

Chapter XXX

Battle for Relocation of County Seat

BATTLE for County Seat. Indianola was in the Fortress. McCook besieged. The Burlington was alleged to be the Trojan Horse and perhaps harsh names were used to stimulate action or remove elector doubts. A story told of the well driller, who did not use his own production, is like the story in the County Chairman back in Indiana, who bargained with a rounder, for the vote of Hoop Pool Township, Posey County and who had trafficked with the Chairman. When the returns were in he telegraphed to a Chairman "Notwithstanding all the efforts of myself and friends your candidate did not receive a single vote in Hoop Pool Township."

Back in the centuries, wars were the game of Kings. County Seats have been the big game of Democracies, and McCook had the aces and the bowers. The contest seemed to turn on procedure, and interpretation more than arithmetic. It began just four centuries from the discovery of America, and ended one presidential term thereafter under the old dispensation. But under present ambitions it might be only 25% of that period.

* * *

The city of McCook having grown so rapidly, and with no doubt of its growth and progress being continuous, thus a larger part of Red Willow County's residents were in the western half, and a re-location of the county seat was being considered by its citizens. The county seat locations and re-locations seemed to be an early-day pastime in most western counties, and Red Willow county was no exception. By the courtesy of Miss Lena Hill, sister of Geo. C. Hill, now deceased, I have her permission to copy his very accurate story of that time and results. Action began in 1890 and terminated in 1896. The story as written by Geo. C. Hill in 1927 now follows. I quote:

"It is fifty years too soon to dig up the details of a fight that rent the county 35 years—the historic battle over re-location of the county seat.

Many men now living took part in that struggle, and it would serve no useful purpose to stir up memories of unfriendly feelings and passions long since cooled. The historian of the future may, if he desires dig into the voluminous records which chronicle that historic contest, write a detailed account of a two-town fight that lasted six years, cost much time and money, shattered friendships and created contempt and hatred that nothing but time could ever cure. But I have no desire to do this, nor to stir recollections of past events, that might better be left undisturbed in the dust of the dim past.

It is an outstanding trait of American character, notably apparent in the pioneers of the west, that men will fight hard and go to extreme lenghts in the pursuit of their desires and the attainment of their ends. The earliest settlers of the county displayed this intense determination to acquire and having acquired, to retain possession of so coveted a prize as the county seat. But while citizens of Red Willow county have always shown the greatest determination in fighting out their differences, even to appeal to the court of last resort, when disputed issues have once been thrashed out to finality, our citizens have always banded together in a common effort for the good of all.

With the arrival of the B. & M. railroad in 1880, the rapid and permanent settlement of the county began. Indianola, already a lusty town, was the terminus of the railroad and the county seat. There were no other towns in the county, McCook then being known as Fairview Post Office, and consisting solely of one sod house on the bank of the Republican river, where South McCook now stands. Culbertson on the west in Hitchcock county, had started some years before. After pausing a year at Indianola, the railroad was extended west to Denver, and the location of a division point and repair shops came up for consideration. Indianola and Culbertson were both contenders for the prize, but failed, and through the efforts of H. C. Rider, the earliest pioneer of McCook, McCook was selected as the railroad division point. This is an interesting story in itself, but it has no place in this narrative.

With the advantage of the railroad influence and a large shop and train force of employees, building homes at the division point, McCook grew rapidly, and soon became the largest town in the county. Indianola still retained the county seat, and citizens from all corners of the county were obliged to make increasingly frequent trips there for the transaction of county business. In a few years, rumors were heard of a move in McCook for a county seat election. Hugh Cole, a prominent lawyer of McCook at that time, is generally credited with taking the initiative in working up a sentiment for moving the county seat. Business and professional men and the great majority of citizens living in the western part of the county, were responsive to Mr. Cole's suggestion, and an organized attempt to remove the county records was made early in 1890.

This period was the golden age of railroad domination over all public matters in Nebraska. It was the self-appointed prerogative of the Burlington and Union Pacific railroads, to make and break, not only politicians, but towns and cities as well. In fact their influence extended to law-making bodies and courts. With a strong railroad element in McCook, and the weight of a larger population the promoters of the move to relocate the county seat, had the prospect of easy victory.

A petition to the county board was circulated and hundreds of names obtained. This petition was headed by the redoubtable R. B. "Neighbor" Archibald and J. H. Rox — by both of whom were railroad shop officials and strong leaders among the railroad men. The territory favorable to McCook, which was the entire western part of the county, was well canvassed, and the petition was filed with the board on April 25, 1890.

Indianola Remonstrates.

Indianola had not been idle, and on the same day, a large remonstrance petition was also filed. Later, other petitions, including many changes of names from one to the other side, were laid before the board. The entire population of the county had risen and divided into factions, one asking for a change and the other opposing it. Each side had able attorneys present at the hearings, and all of the members of the county bar were lined up on one or the other side, and took active part on the struggle.

The county board at this time, consisted of Henry Crabtree, chairman, a resident of Indianola, and a firm partisan of that town; Stephen Bolles of Box Elder precinct, first, last and always for McCook, and Dr. Isaiah Bennett of Lebanon precinct who was presumably neutral. Dr. Bennett's record shows that he was always fair and a sticker for orderly procedure and fair play. He did not live to see the end of the fight. The board had full power to call an election, and was the sole judge of the sufficiency and legality of the petition. Divided as it was, and with an array of leading citizens and attorneys urging the claims of the respective sides, the commissioners were forced to show their hands, which they did in no uncertain manner. Prompted by keen lawyers versed in every trick of the legal profession, and the strong sympathies on their own parts, the commissioners entered into the struggle with as much spirit and determination as the contending parties themselves.

All parties were able to agree that 491 names on the McCook petition were legal. Also that not less than 954 names were required to call an election. The fight then hinged on the legality of the names challenged by Indianola. McCook in turn, challenged many names on the Indianola remonstrance. After a stormy session, lasting all day, the board adjourned to April 30 for final decision. Between these meetings many names on both petition and remonstrance had been changed. The meeting of April 30 was adjourned from day to day until on May 6, with the tide of battle so evenly balanced that neither side could claim an advantage, the board adjourned from sheer exhaustion and the impossibility of reaching an agreement on any question.

At a subsequent meeting, the board sought to revise the minutes of the May 6 meeting, and this brought an immediate suit on the part of McCook to restrain the board from making such a revision. This injunction suit failed, and the board revised its minutes to show that the burden of proof of the legality of certain petitioners, rested on McCook. This was done to establish a groundwork for future court proceedings for a peremptory writ of mandamus, compelling the commissioners to call an election. The court appointed J. B. Cessna to take testimony concerning the voting status of the challenged petitioneers. The evidence was duly taken and presented to the supreme court.

Mr. Cessna presented a bill to the commissioners for $400, covering the cost of taking the testimony. This claim was rejected by a strict party vote, the neutral member voting with the Indianola man.

Pending a decision by the supreme court, action ceased, until on September 29, Justin A. Wilcox of McCook, on behalf of himself and others petitioned the board to reconsider its revision of the minutes of the famous May 6 meeting, and asked the board to approve the minutes as originally written. This reversal of position was a strategic move, in an effort to get a record. No action was taken for months, until December 6, the board voted to deny Mr. Wilcox' petition. Thus, after nearly a year of sparring, no progress had been made, the election was postponed indefinitely and the whole matter held up, pending a decision of the supreme court on an order for calling an election.

Situation is Unchanged.

The situation remained without change during all of 1891 and until June 30, 1892. The only action taken by any party being that of the county board in voting a disclaimer of responsibility for costs in the action pending in the supreme court.

While nothing apparent to view was done, neither side had been idle. Knowing that sooner or later, the court must decide the question of a call for an election, on the sufficiency of the petition submitted, all efforts were turned to the election, of county officers, especially the two commissioners, to succeed Crabtree and Bennett, whose terms would expire at the end of 1891. McCook was successful in electing her men, Samuel Young of Bartley and Samuel S. Graham of Danbury being elected. Bolles held over another year.

Finally, on June 30, 1892, the court's decision was announced, granting the writ of mandamus, and ordering the board to call an election at its first meeting after service of the writ. The board met on July 6, accepted service of the court's order, and voted unanimously to call an election for August 1.

Now came the supreme effort on both sides to muster votes. 1892 was the year of the most bountiful wheat crop ever grown in Red Willow County. With the attendant prosperity, and a well-organized political machine, the McCook party was confident of an easy victory. However, no stone was left unturned by either side. During the preliminary campaign and the following time after election, charges and counter charges of fraud and illegal practices were made by both sides. McCook circulated a large dodger showing a picture of the recently-built Furmas County court house at Beaver City, at a cost of $13,200, and promising over the signatures of 300 responsible citizens of McCook, to donate to the county, an equal sum in cash and a site for the courthouse, if the election should favor McCook. Indianola immediately countered with a similar offer of a new county building, conditional upon the county seat remaining there.

It was an era of corrupt practices in politics, and the issues at stake in this election were so great that every device and sharp practice known to practical politics was undoubtedly employed by both sides. At this distance of time, a fair consideration of the events of that struggle leads to the conclusion, that on the whole the county seat election was as fair as the average ballot contest of those early days. And if illegal votes were cast, or methods used not within the law, that such reprehensible practices were probably chargeable to both sides. Certain it is that no election ever held in the county called forth greater effort or created more bitter feeling.

At the preceding general election, the total vote was less than sixteen hundred. The total number of ballots cast on the county seat question, was 2,237, or nearly 50 percent larger than the vote cast nine months previously. Of the 2,237 votes cast, 2,206 were counted, of which Indianola received 867 and McCook received 1,339. The discrepancy of 31 ballots was accounted for as follows:

Ballots not reported or accounted for	25
Ballots rejected	1
Blank ballots	3
Ballots written for McCook and not counted	2
Total	31

Relocation of a county seat requiring by law, three-fifths of the total vote, the election was very close, and the result hinged on an interpretation of the law governing the uncounted ballots. If these 31 ballots should be taken into consideration, McCook lacked four votes of the necessary 1,343 to equal three-fifths of the entire number of votes cast. If only the counted ballots were to be considered, McCook had won the election, with fifteen votes to spare. Both sides claimed the victory, and another struggle in the courts became a certainty.

It will be of interest to the residents of the county who read this, to scan the vote by precincts. This is given below, and it will be noticed that the precincts voted mainly according to their location with references to the two contending towns. The question of taxation did not enter, as each side had gone on record with responsible guarantees, for the donation of a new county building.

Precinct	For Indianola	For McCook
Alliance	90	3
Beaver	57	24
Bondville	44	18
Box Elder	17	52
Coleman		39
Danbury	27	32
Driftwood		62
East Valley	103	10
Fritch	60	8
Gerver	4	35
Indianola	181	9
Grant	2	24
Lebanon	50	16
Missouri Ridge	59	
North Valley	58	3
Perry	3	70
Red Willow	55	18
Tyrone	43	4
Valley Grange	2	48
Willow Grove	12	854
	867	1332

Coleman and Driftwood precinct voted solidly for McCook, and Missouri Ridge cast her entire vote for Indianola. Willow Grove gave Indianola 12 votes and Indianola cast nine votes for

McCook. In the subsequent long-drawn-out court proceedings, one of Indianola's strongest claims in her contest of the election, was that the ballots in Coleman precinct had been signed by one judge only, instead of by two as required by law. Long after the question was finally settled, and the records had been moved to McCook, it came to light that in Bondville precinct, which gave Indianola a good majority, none of the ballots had been signed by any judge.

A Plot that Failed.

I must digress to mention one incident of the many that made this election notable. Missouri Ridge precinct, so named from the preponderance of its settlers hailing from that state, had among its citizens a well-known character, with quite a reputation for getting drunk and whipping any man with whom he could pick a quarrel. While drinking and fighting were his favorite pastimes, he also worked frequently, at digging wells, an occupation chaffed by his friends for having anything to do with water, he would excuse himself by saying that while he personally, had very little use for water, preferring good corn whiskey, some water was necessary for the stock, and weak-minded people who knew no better than to drink it, and thus he dug wells to supply that demand.

When the county seat question came up, this man saw a chance to turn an honest dollar without toil and to get some free drinks of his favorite beverage. He worked out a scheme to offer the McCook managers the vote of his precinct in return for a modest per diem for his services and a good supply of whiskey for securing votes. Liquor was a potent weapon in that election, and the McCook men fell for the scheme. My hero was supplied with ten gallons to start with and more later on, and McCook counted on a solid vote from the Missourians. They did vote solid, but every vote went to Indianola.

Whether Indianola furnished a better brand of liquor or a larger supply, I cannot say. I am safe in saying however, that the residents of that precinct, probably never before, nor since, enjoyed so ample a free supply of the cup that cheers. This incident was the subject of much merriment for many years, but has always been a tender topic of conversation on the part of the victims. The hero of this tale found it convenient to absent himself from the county for some time after the election. But in after years, the incident was forgiven if not forgotten, and he lived many years in McCook until his death, a respected and honored citizen.

McCook claimed the election and took steps to put her victory into immediate effect. Indianola demurred, and filed a contest. The matter was again referred to the supreme court on points of law. The best legal talent in the state was employed, and the old struggle renewed with each side determined to win at any cost. The bitter feeling between the towns was extreme and men carried the fight into their personal and business affairs. Extremists swore they would never again set foot in McCook, and several made their threat good. Strained relations continued for years even after the county seat question was decided. But with the passage of time, this feeling has almost if not entirely, passed away.

The contest raged from August, 1892, through four long weary years, with both sides confident and defiant. Then came a decision of the supreme court favorable to Indianola. The citizens of that town were jubilant, and celebrated their victory by an immense mass meeting and monster bonfire on the main street of the town, and near the railroad depot, where passing trains could witness their joyful demonstration. Everybody seemed to accept the fight as finished, and the long tension relieved for all time. Someone, however, had one card to play. Just what happened, nobody ever knew, but in a short time, the supreme court announced a reversal of its former decision, and that McCook had won the county seat fight. There was another celebration, the final one, and this action of the high court proved to be the final act in a drama memorable in Nebraska history. Indianola made another feeble effort to revive the case, but exhausted financially by six years of fighting, none of her citizens were inclined to finance another fight, and the matter ended.

Final Decision in 1896.

The court's final decision was handed down on April 15, 1896. The commissioners met on April 20, for a final session at Indianola, and adjourned their meeting to McCook where they again convened on the same day for an informal session. On the 23rd, the board met and entered into an 18 months lease for rooms in the C. W. Meeker building, for temporary county use. Here the county records and the officers remained for about two years, until the new building promised by the city of McCook could be built and presented to the county. When the building was completed, the officers were moved into permanent quarters, where they have remained ever since, until a year ago, they were again moved into temporary quarters awaiting completion of the magnificent new court house just finished and recently occupied.

Time Heals Wounds.

Thirty years had elapsed between the final settlement of the county seat contest and the election for bonds for building the present building. Time has healed the bitterness of the old days, for the vote was decisive one year ago, for a better building adequate for the needs of a reunited county. Surely the people of this county have submerged their local differences and turned their attention to the larger matters of community concern. Indianola still lives, and thrives, a good country town without a superior in southwestern Nebraska. She has been the victim of influence beyond her control, and not to be forseen or overcome. McCook, by the happy fortune of chance and a close affiliation with one of our country's great corporations, has flourished and grown to be the Queen City of this corner of the state. A city of which every citizen of the county may be proud, and whose destiny it is, I fondly believe, to grow in size and inflence in the future development of this great state of Nebraska."

I have purposely refrained from mentioning by name the men of both towns, who assumed leadership of the respective contending forces, and who gave so loyally of their time and money to achieve the object of their desires. This coud not be done with justice to all who had a part in the struggle and to do so would also touch tenderspots perhaps not yet quite healed. What has been said will serve as a means to recall to the minds of old-timers, the dramatic happenings of those hectic days.

Chapter XXXI

I Begin My Banking Career

BEGINS a Banking career at Bartley and ends within the Chapter. The early mushroom growth of a sporadic enterprise exotic to the time and place gives the writer a slight insight into basic Bartley conditions making it very difficult to achieve a complete success, especially with the unfortunate National economic matters. A young banker friend from Fairmont in an adjoining county was unfortunate in his Bartley speculative ventures. Fortunately the alliance of J. W. Dolan and L. E. Southwick meant substantial soundness if adequate profits were not obtained. The Chapter reveals the banking didactics of the author in different ways as a basis of his financial and professional standing and success. Limited compensation and a sad family bereavement urged him "Back to the Farm". It has been one of the best backward movements under general observation for years, and in that he and his life-mate agreed.

* * *

We moved to Bartley March 8, 1892, having secured a part of a large home in which to live, a good family occupying the other part. At the time, Bartley homes were all occupied. We arranged our home the afternoon of March 8th and on March 9th I did my first day's work in a bank. The assistant cashier had left about three days before, sooner than planned, and as the cashier was not familiar with the books, nothing had been done towards balancing or posting during that time. He had received deposits, paid checks, made small loans and received payment of and on some loans. He had made a record of his work outside of checks and deposits. It was now my first job to write up the business, post and balance the books, all on unfamiliar forms and items. I studied the forms and methods. When the safe opened, we counted the cash, and, as there was no dividing line, I balanced and posted the cash and books as of the day before, and all work was completed and ready to cash up at close of the day. This success put me in the good graces and confidence of Mr. Frost.

Now a few words about the Bank of Bartley and its assets and liabilities may be of interest. I wish I had a statement, but in the absence of one I will write from memory. It had a capital of $20,000, no surplus, but undivided profits around $2,300. The capital had all been paid in cash, but some very unfortunate and injudicious loans had been made prior to Mr. Frost's purchasing $9,000 of the $20,000 stock, which resulted in the acquiring through foreclosure of around $10,000 worth of unproductive real estate in the form of Bartley business and residence lots and outlying acreages. Mr. Frost thought it worth the money so did not hesitate in his purchase. This acquisition of real estate was really a liability instead of an asset as taxes had to be paid on non-producing property. We managed to sell a lot occasionally, using the money received in paying taxes and thus reducing the value of the asset without reducing the principle. This was a load that was liquidated a few years later by reducing the capital and charging off the real estate. The deposits were about $20,000.00 the majority being time deposits on which 6% interest was paid. There were about 125 checking accounts, mostly small and active. The capital and about sixty per cent of deposits were in real estate and loans, mostly small and proved to be good. At that time, and it was a practice I did not like or approve of, interest charges were from 1 to 3 per cent per month, a violation of law, and its penalty a forfeiture of interest. The bank had only one case of this kind in court when I entered its employ, and lost. None after that. The bank was operated in the corner of a two-story brick building on a rental of $15 per month and all handwork was with pen. No typewriters, no adding machines, none needed in order to get the work done. The bank did a lot of things to supplement the loan income. Wrote insurance, made loans on farms for loan companies, rented and collected rents on commission basis for absentee land-owners, sold real estate on commission, and collected exchange on all drafts written for checks mailed out in payment of bills or good. I had been in the bank only a short time until I realized that all the book work and a large part of its management would be my job. Mr. Frost had many other interests, some property in Lincoln to look after, and was gone a great deal of the time. He had been a railroad conductor for many years, possessed an annual pass, and I felt took many trips just for the ride. I soon realized that he was a prince of a good fellow but banking was out of his line. The year 1892 was a good year and following the good crops of 1891 we were really getting a pretty good line of business. Folks coming and purchasing the land from absentee holders and local residents of small means, added to our clientele. Hogs and cattle increased, thus adding stability to the country. As my acquaintance grew with the people and the business, I really liked my job, all but the rates of interest paid and charged. I felt both were too high, but we were then in the primitive developing west.

It might be of interest to record the banking houses of Red Willow County and their managing officers at the time I entered employment in the Bank of Bartley, March, 1892. In Indianola, the county seat, the State Bank, largely owned and managed by J. W. Dolan as President and Mike Morres, his cashier. In McCook, the First National Bank, largely owned by B. M. Frees, a lumberman of Chicago, and managed by George Hocknell, President, and W. F. Lawson, cashier. The Citizens' Bank, largely owned and operated by V. Franklin, President, and Al Ebert acting as cashier. This bank was very helpful to the farmers and stockmen, and was generally spoken of as "the farmers' friend". (The bank of Benkelman, Benkelman, Nebraska, was also largely owned by V. Franklin and operated by him and his cashier). The First National Bank of McCook was the railroad bank and catered more to the city and lumber trade. The Bank of Danbury was owned and operated by T. E. McDonald, President, and Mr. Ewart, his cashier. The Bank at Lebanon was owned and operated by J. W. Hupp, of McCook, President, and E. E. Devoe, Cashier, a resident of Lebanon. By this review it is apparent that Red Willow County was not lacking in banking facilities, there being a bank in each of the towns and two in McCook, and it is a known fact that notwithstanding the high interest charges on small loans, they greatly assisted the citizenry of that day. In manw instances to my knowledge, the timely help granted restored to many the ability to preserve and keep their homes.

Deposit lines those days were small and their aggregate likewise, but in like proportion were the borrowers' needs. As I recall, the First National Bank of McCook had less than $100,000 deposits, today (1940) it has near a million and a half. The good crop of 1892 with both wheat and corn being marketed and its checks being cashed or deposited in the bank, reflected in the growing deposit lines, the progress and prosperity of our people. Land values were rising and a number of farm sales made to new settlers with more resources added additional stability to our people. A goodly number were now building frame houses, which were indeed gratifying to their occupants especially when it rained, yet lacked one thing of the old soddy—the warmth in winter.

Soon after our marriage, Rosa and I united with the M. E. Church at Danbury. We retained our membership there until we moved to Bartley. Considering now that we were permanently located, we transferred our membership to the M. E. Church at Bartley. In the fall of 1892, I was chosen as assistant superintend of the Sunday School. Soon after this the superintendent, our druggist, sold out and moved to California, thus leaving me with a school again on my hands. I loved to work with young folks, entered into this Sunday School job with the same zeal I did in my day schools, had good help in the teachers and song leader and enjoyed the work. This job I carried for nearly five years. I mention our religious convictions and work because I believed then, and still hold to that belief, that if you can instill in the minds and hearts of the young, while they are yet tender and receptive, the master thoughts on the true way to life and happiness both in this world and the world to come, as taught and lived by the master teacher of all time, the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, that you are doing a worthwhile work in helping to build character, that makes for better neighbors, better friends, better homes and better communities. No boy or girl, no young man or young lady, was ever led astray or tarnished in morals, act or thought in Sunday School or Church, but in many other places, watch your step. It is a source of regret and concern to many that the places of amusement are digressing so many of our young people from the finer, more serious and character-building things of life, that would be helpful in and through life as taught in church and Sunday School, for the pleasures of the passing moment. I am not sure that we older ones are not "our brother's keeper". By permitting the places of amusement to operate on the only day set aside for religious worship and instruction. Young people cannot be faulted with propriety, for choosing that which pleases their immature and undeveloped minds, when we "oldsters" permit them on the Sabbath Day, we are virtually saying to our "youngsters"—there you are, take your choice: The passing fancy of amusement, or religious instruction through the greatest and best teacher of all time, whose teaching, counsel and leadership will be a help to you in your life's work and in meeting and solving its responsibilities.

Now back to banking—Mr. Dolan being President and active manager of his bank, also president of our bank, I soon realized that he was naturally capable and skilled by practice and experience. I consulted him often in problems on which I preferred not to take the responsibility of making decisions. He gave me freely and generously of his time, and a few statements he made in such consultations stand out in my memory. In substance one was, "Always keep in mind your great responsibility to your depositors. The money you loan in excess of your capital, surplus and profits, is money that belongs to them. It is the only thing that you can pay their checks with, so when parting with it in the form of a loan, get a loan that is sound and can be paid when due." Another principle he put into practice was to "Never make a loan to anyone unless you believed it would be constructive and helpful to the borrower." Also to carefully study the capacity of the borrower, through a sympathetic and frank discussion of his problem, and refuse a loan rather than to permit the borrower in his zeal for expansion to overload his capacity, which might bring discouragement and ruination to the borrower and possible loss to the bank. The above principles carefully adhered to will greatly assist customers and maintain a sound and helpful banking institution. I question very much, had I known that I was assuming a managerial job without any previous experience, that I would have taken it. However, my school-teaching was some training in human nature and I as getting along very well, no embarrassment to me or customers and, as I said before, I really liked my job. We were getting additional customers, I liked them and did all I could in a helpful, friendly way to merit their patronage. We had correspondent connections who could and did take care of the needs of our large cattle feeder loan requirements and this, taken directly, left us with our small resources in a position to take care of the smaller needs of our territory. I believed then, and I believe now, that when a man calls on his banker for a small loan, he is entitled to the same sympathetic discussion of his problem as the larger borrower, and if constructive and of apparent helpfulness, the loan should be made if within the ability of the bank. If in my judgment, it was not constructive or helpful, it was always my practice to give the customer my view-point, and, in refusing to ask him to call again as future problems arose and perhaps they might be of such a nature that we could be helpful. I did then, and follow that practice to the present time, when making a loan try and have the borrower realize and understand that we, in making him a loan, were entering into a silent partnership with him to the extent of the sum loaned and, as a partner, we were interested financially in his progress and success and were also entitled to know from time to time of that progress. I do feel such an attitude has brought us, customer and banker, in ever-increasing closer relationship and such relationships have proven over the years to be mutually profitable.

When the bank examiner called that summer, (they only called once a year then,) the first with us, after I entered the bank, I was indeed glad the cashier was on the job. I naturally thought all books would be verified, certificates proved and checked, notes classified as to their securities and soundness, in fact examine and audit the bank. The examiner and cashier sat and visited, smoked and seemed to be enjoying themselves. Thus passed the forenoon, not a thing done. After the noon hour, the examiner asked me for the note case and he spent about an hour looking through it promiscuously, then he asked for the paid certificates and checked them off the bound register, after which they lit fresh cigars and smoked some more. After a time, I suppose he just thought of it, he asked for the general statement book and seemed to be adding it to verify its totals but did not verify it with the general ledger. By this time, it was closing time and I heard him say to the cashier. "You have a sweet little bank and exceptionally well managed". I might have puffed up a little, had I been capable of believing him, for I knew that he had not spent sufficient time on his job to know anything about it. He had not even opened the "Boston Ledger", in which a record of the deposits subject to check were kept, and made no attempt to prove them. So much for the inefficient political appointees of that day.

Our annual meeting of the stockholders and directors occurred in January each year, and it was at this meeting in January, 1893 that I first met Mr. L. E. Southwick, of Friend, Nebraska, who with Mr. Dolan and Mr. Frost were the sole owners of the bank stock and were the bank's board of directors. Mr. Southwick, like Mr. Dolan, was an active experienced banker, a man of wide experience and interests, in the prime of life, and our acquaintance, friendship and interest in each other grew with the years. He and Mr. Dolan, both now deceased, were men of whom it can be justly said, that they exemplified in their lives and characters the qualities and attributes that make men great, respected, and loved. In that meeting I received my raise from $40 to $50 and was commended by Mr. Dolan and Mr. Southwick on the growth and condition of the business. This, on both counts, I appreciated very much, for as to the business, I knew they had gone into it thoroughly and were in a position to commend or criticize, and the additional funds in the raise was indeed helpful.

1893 was the year of the Chicago Fair, also the Panic, and Mr. Frost decided to spend a couple of weeks at the Fair and other points east. With the crops of 1892 mostly marketed, cattle and hogs finding their way to the bank, we had a pleasing increase in deposits, and as I recall were carrying around 40% reserve. Mr. Frost had only been gone a couple of days when I received a letter from our Omaha correspondent bank that a panic was on in New York and no doubt would spread over the country. That evening I drove the horse and cart, "The bank's automobile at that time," to Indianola to talk matters over with Mr. Dolan. Early in our conversation I asked him if I had better wire Mr. Frost to come home. He said, "Positively no, you will handle the situation that might arise better than he. You are always on the job and the people will have more confidence in what you say. I have full confidence in your being able to handle it." The next day I wrote Mr. Southwick and sent him a statement of condition. I told him of my interview with Mr. Dolan and asked if he had any suggestions. In his answer he replied largely as did Mr. Dolan and said he thought the panic would soon be over, but if I needed help, they could and would help me. That put a good dose of confidence in me. In this Panic, cash was called for and paid out, no clearing house certificates issued—(as in the next panic in 1908)—just ship in and pay out. I will not unduly prolong this narrative only to say I surely had a rude awakening, for folks in town and country whom I thought were my true friends, both in business and socially and had confidence in me and the bank, began to draw their money and close their accounts. Many did not and some even argued with others that they would break the bank by such actions, leave it in as we are doing, and Stilgebouer will put through all right! Kindly said, but not in the most helpful language. After a couple of weeks it began to let up. I always appeared unruffled and in good nature, inviting them to bring it back, when the "war" was over. Soon it began to come back, (no postal savings facilities in which to deposit those days) and in about six weeks we were back to normal with a loss of perhaps ten per cent of our deposits, spent or in the "sugar bowl". I needed no help and was happy to be able to successfully handle the unpleasant situation. Values began to go down, as is always the case under such conditions, and so far as our people were concerned shrinking values were a regretable result of the panic.

The year 1893 was a good average crop year as to both wheat and corn. Hogs and cattle and prices were fair for the times, as comparative values to commodities purchased for farm and home consumption and needs. The towns were growing in residences and business, fully reflecting the growth and prosperity of the farms. At that time there were no so-called large land-owners, but small units of a quarter, half or a section, with a family on each with whom to neighbor or trade. By the spring of 1894, surplus crops had been pretty well disposed of and the spring crop of pigs depended on the 1894 corn crop to be marketed as a finished product. Cattle were more numerous, as well as hogs, on the farms and we looked forward to a good, prosperous year. The fates decreed otherwise. It just simply refused to rain and no corn or small grain was raised on the upland or divides and very little "nubbing" corn on the bottoms or valley land.

By this time, we had learned that alfalfa required more moisture to grow successfully on the uplands than we received, so it was not sown, but on the valleys in 1894 a good seed crop and one crop of hay was produced. The Beaver Valley farmers had a sizeable acreage on most of the farms and they, with this income and feed help, got through very nicely for their cattle had feed; but hogs were a liability. On the Republican Valley very little alfalfa had been sown and as there was no corn or feed it was a quandary what to do. The drouth was general over most of the state and there was a lack of rain in adjoining states and thus a feed and grain shortage. In early September, a customer shipped a car of 60 to 100 pound hogs to Kansas City, and after disposing of them the commission merchant drew a draft on the customer for part of the freight and advised no further shipments as the yards were excessively supplied with pigs. It did not need a new deal administration to tell them to kill their pigs. They could not and would not let them starve so there was nothing else to do. I know of families who killed their shoats that fall, or some of them, that were so thin they would not even fry the meat themselves and besides it was so unpalatable it could not be eaten. With very little feed for cattle, the larger part of them were shipped to market at Omaha and Kansas City, and sold for much less than normal values. A number of our people left for work East and West and some left who never returned. While this condition added greatly to the burdens of the farmers and business houses, it multiplied the burdens, trials and difficulties of the banks. The cashier was on the job now most of the time and I, with horse and cart, called on most of our borrowers to look over their conditions and help work out plans for our mutual benefit. Loans then, as now, were largely secured by chattel mortgages, that is, a written pledge setting aside certain described stock and implements to be held under the law as a pledge for the payment of the debt. I am happy to report that, with this calamitous condition, we had but one man who turned over the stock pledged to us before leaving and by our handling it, paid out. It was indeed a tremendous calamity and difficult to meet, but as the winter was mild those who remained on their farms, and most of them did, got through, as grazing was possible most of the winter. That fall some help was sent in by different fraternal organizations, and other civic societies distributed locally and the most needy people were helped in this manner. Our people generally were gritty and resourceful and not unlike the birds of the air, "though their meals were sometimes scanty, close picking made them sweet."

That fall, October 27, 1894, another little girl came to our home to the delight and joy of her father, mother, brother and sister. She was a dear sweet child and we were all indeed happy in her coming. As she grew to womanhood, I will speak of her and her life at other times in this writing, but just now I will leave her by saying she was just a dear, sweet little "dumpling", and we named her Bernice Lorena.

In the spring of 1895, some of our people who had left for work returned, and all concerned started in again with renewed vigor in the cultivation of the soil in preparation for crops. No wheat was sown the fall before by reason of the drouth and as most of the farming was "grassed in" as we called it, farming without grain, some land went unfarmed, as did practically all of the farms of those who abandoned them. The deposit lines naturally became less by use of funds, thus curtailing the helpfulness of the banks to its customers and its income, as otherwise would have been possible. A better crop was raised in 1895 but not a normal crop of corn and no wheat. Some wheat was sown the fall of 1895 but the fall was dry and it ultimately proved a failure. 1896 was some better as to corn, but cattle and hogs were greatly depleted as to numbers, particularly the latter. A lot of fall wheat was sown the fall of 1896.

The deposit lines had so greatly diminished, with the consequent shrinking of loans, I felt that there was no immediate future in the business of banking for us, and it was indeed a struggle to live on our meager income. Rosa and I began to consider an offer my father made us to go on his west Beaver bottom farm. I practically did all the work and the business only needed one man. Had the cashier quit, for he could not handle it, I would have gone on at an increased salary, but would not suggest such a thing, as that would put him out of a job and his salary. We were really very much concerned as to just what was best and the right thing to do, as Mr. and Mrs. Frost had always been very kind to us, helpful in sickness and in every way possible. It was really difficult to make a decision or know just what was the right thing to do by all concerned, but to go on with our meager salary was out of the question. At the 1896 annual meeting I had voluntarily reduced my salary to $40 per month by reason of short income in the bank, there being nothing for the owners. While we were in deep concern over this, our little girl Lizzie took membraneous croup on the night of December 20 and passed away noon, December 21, 1896. A sweet, dear, little girl, 5 years of age, "Budded on earth to bloom in Heaven." Our hearts were indeed sorrowful. Rosa in her beautiful philosophy of life was a great comfort to me for she said, in the meeting of her passing, and our first great sorrow, "Pappa, we have each other, S. W. and Bernice, and we can and will still be happy". We laid her away in the Danbury Cemetery and returned with sad hearts to again take up the problems of the living.

We made up our minds to go to the farm, as we knew it to be productive with 40 acres of alfalfa on it, and hoped to make a better living with less expense. I told Mr. Frost of our plans, he regretted the decision but offered nothing to change it, and agreed no doubt it would be best for us. I wrote Mr. Dolan and Mr. Southwick of my desire and said we could go fully into the matter at the annual meeting. We had made many dear friends in our five years' intimate relations with them and regretted the parting, and also the thing that made it more difficult to give it up, I liked the job—I realized a banker can do a lot of good in the world, can be helpful and constructive in all lines, and also believed that we had reached the turning point of drouth and would have a series of good years. I loved to be associated with Mr. Dolan and Mr. Southwick, and believed in the future of the bank and territory, but now the bank only needed one man and could have paid him a living wage. I could not bring myself to say to Mr. Dolan and Mr. Southwick, let the cashier go, pay me a living wage and I will go on and manage the bank. We had sold our homestead for a meager sum, paid our debts and supplemented our salary with the balance. In plain words, we were about broke and had to have more income or less expense. Time came for annual meeting with Mr. Dolan, Mr. Southwick and

Mr. Frost all present. We thoroughly analyzed the bank, and they approved of its condition. They especially approved of the fact that I had loaned some additional money for seed wheat and that a good acreage was sown, as disclosed in our chattel mortgages. Mr. Southwick remarked "If we don't sow we can't reap—our folks now have two chances, wheat and corn for next year." They discussed my desire to discontinue my service in the bank and asked me to reconsider, but said nothing about wages. They both knew a book-keeper would have to be hired, if I left, as they knew the cashier to be incapable of doing the job and questioned his ability to manage the business. They asked for a private interview with me and the cashier retired. In that interview they suggested that I be elected cashier on a salary of $75 per month, as sole manager, and urged me to reconsider and accept. I would have indeed been happy to do so, but had in mind the interest of the cashier whom I would be displacing and frankly told them I could not accept and why. When the cashier returned the situation was again discussed and they finally decided to put me in full charge until April 1st to liquidate as many loans as I could without distress to the borrower and, about the middle of March to put a notice in the paper and on the door requesting the depositors to call and get their money or we would transfer their funds to the State Bank, Indianola, as we were not paying out and closing April 1st. This was the decision of Mr. Dolan and Mr. Southwick and quite a shock to Mr. Frost. They agreed to put up the additional money required to do this, and it required a little less than $6,000.00. The resolution was carried out as planned, and all transfer of deposits made and the books and notes delivered to Mr. Dolan on March 31, 1897, and on April 1st, we moved to the farm. This ended my banking carrer as I supposed, but again the fates decreed otherwise. The sequel for later record.

A couple of years after we paid off our depositors and closed our bank, I inquired of Mr. Dolan how he came out on the collection of the notes I turned over to him. He replied that most of them were paid the first year, and all the next, except about $600, $300 of which Mr. Frost had loaned a friend in Lincoln, a fellow owing $200 had left taking his security with him, and the rest in small sums aggregating about $100 which might be paid.

Dr. Dolan remarked that it was surely a tribute to the honesty and appreciation of the borrowers for the help given when needed, in this caring for their obligations. A loss of less than four per cent and this much more than covered by the interest received. As stated, on April 1st, 1897, we moved to the Beaver on the valley farm of my father and on that morning, April 1st, it was very cloudy, and by noon it began to rain, and for three days and nights, the wind gently blowing from the northeast, it rained so beautifully, never heavy, but in volume over three inches, all soaking into the ground and starting the crop year in apparently perfect condition.

Liquidating our bank left Bartley bankless only a short while, for the law at that time permitted the organization of a State Bank with a minimum capital of five thousand dollars. Before I left Bartley Mr. W. V. Vickrey, E. E. Smith and Dr. J. E. Hathorn had decided to so organize, realizing Bartley would be at a great inconvenience without a bank. The organization was completed early in May with Dr. J. E. Hathorn, President, E. E. Smith, vice president, W. V. Vickrey, cashier and A. L. Cochran, assistant cashier. Mr. Vickrey owned and operated a general store in the old bank building, Mr. Cochran being in his employ. The bank was grilled off in a convenient corner in the store and operated by them as managers. By this arrangement, the expense of operation could be held to a minimum and yet have the facilities of a banking house in the town and community. To anticipate, in a few years it outgrew this arrangement and Mr. Vickrey sold his store and moved the bank to the original banking room where Mr. Vickrey was placed in full-time management.

Chapter XXXII

Farming and School Teaching, 1897

FARMING and School Teaching. Feeding the livestock and developing young American minds must have left little time for sleep. "The deer will return to the salt lick." The prodigal will seek his home. There are antonymical illustrations in Scripture. They don't fit here, because farming, teaching, banking and officiating are all honorable and usually desirable. He who indulged in all, must, as "the shadows longer grow" make final decision and adhere to it before time's fretting tooth has worn away enterprise, vigor, courage and perseverance. So we find our author turning again to banking at Bartley. He returns not merely as an employee, but as general manager whose decision is the last word in authority. His terms were extended that no breach of statute by design or indirection be permitted. He was in good terms with his competitors of old. It was the real beginning of his life's harvest.

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The year 1897, wheat and corn, alfalfa, and all crops were good and prices were good, especially wheat. That was the year young Leiter "cornered" the wheat on the Board of Trade and many of our people realized almost a dollar per bushel, a double price those years.

A school house was located only one fourth mile from our home, and we figured that we could hire our corn husked and my teaching would bring us quite a sum of extra money. I applied for the school, secured my certificate, and early in September, began teaching quite a large school in mv first school district, No. 4, but this time in a nice frame school house, with good equipment and a uniformity of books. The wages were $40 per month for an eight months' school. We had milk and butter, butchered our own hogs for meat and lard, and some hogs during the winter to sell. That fall I had my man drill 75 acres fall wheat, the fall was favorable, and we could look forward with some assurance of a good harvest. The winter passed quickly and I was back on the farming job.

An incident of early spring before school was out I think worth mentioning, as the joke was on me. Some friends from Bartley were visiting us, and one of the ladies asked S. W. (our boy) "How do you like your teacher"? He hesitated a few moments and then replied, "Oh, I have seen better." He compared me with the only teachers he had ever had and he liked the ladies better.

We raised a good general crop the year 1898 and having about 150 hogs and shoats, and corn to shuck, I decided to not teach again, but to husk my corn and avoid the extra help which added to Rosa's work, and it would have worked out fine but for one think. The Beaver was a hog-raising valley, alfalfa contributing to this and making this part of livestock profitable. Early in October hog cholera developed west of us in a very large hog-raising farm. It was its first appearance on the valley and it swept down the valley and our hogs became afflicted, with the final result of only nine left and those, having had the disease, proved to be a bill of expense instead of a profit. In disposing of the dead hogs, we started burying them, then some one tried burning them. This proved more efficient and less work. This misfortune was a tremendous loss to us, and after the corn was husked and marketed at a low price I, for the first time since coming to Nebraska, was out of a job, except chores. I did the chores through December and most of January 1899, milking five cows and taking the milk to a cooperative creamery in Danbury, which helped some on the living. Late in January the teacher in my old District 12, "White Hall" resigned, and two of the board came up to get me to finish the school, also telling me they wanted me the next year. As we expected to move to the home farm of my father's near Danbury that fall, I signed up for the school. It paid $40 per month, three months to finish the term and this would be quite helpful to us.

The distance from our home was seven miles. I milked the cows, did the chores each day, delivering the milk enroute through Danbury. It was agreed I was expected to be at the school house until eight A. M. I did my own janitor work and was never late. Some job—including the chores, the drive, and the school. The first week in February 1899 was the most severe quiet cold weather I have ever experienced in Nebraska for so long a duration. The thermometer at the creamery in Danbury registered 30 to 32 degrees below zero each morning during that week and did not rise a great deal during the day. This school was like going home after six years. Many of the former pupils still in school, some children of my former school mates, and we had a very pleasant three months. Good crops in 1899 but the grasshoppers were getting quite troublesome and did a lot of damage to the alfalfa and corn. These were not the old migrating kind of the earlier days, but a native variety somewhat similar.

In August, we moved to the home farm near Danbury. My brother Solomon, who had been operating it, bought a business and moved to town. With the general good crops of 1897, 1898 and 1899 many of our people built frame houses to the delight and appreciation of the homemakers. Sod houses and dugouts were rapidly disappearing. The school year 1899-1900 was a busy one and quickly passed, and spring came with its farming duties. In the year 1900 wheat was good, but July and August were very dry, hence very little corn. That summer hoppers were very numerous and destructive, especially so on alfalfa. We built a so-called "hopper dozer" built on sled runners with pans of water, kerosene on top and a back for them to hop against and fall in. This was drawn over the alfalfa by team, a horse at each end. The contact with kerosene killed them. It was a slow, tedious job, we got pan after pan full of hoppers, but it was a failure as to any ultimate good. This method of destroying hoppers was discarded that year.

I taught the White Hall school again the year 1900-1901 and in the spring was again a farmer. The early part of the season we had sufficient rain to produce good small grain, but the corn growing season was very dry and corn practically a failure. We had about forty acres of alfalfa seed, and most of it in stack, when in the early night of September 1, 1901, we had the most terrific downpour of rain we ever experienced, before or since, on our immediate territory. The rain came from the west with one continual roar of thunder, just a gentle wind with it and about seven thirty P. M. it began to rain and rained until about six A. M. From the time it started raining until long after midnight there seemed to be a continual flash of lightning, and roar of thunder, and the flood gates of heaven wide open. The next morning the valley—a mile wide in front of our home—was covered with water from two to three feet deep, and flowing east in waves. It was indeed an awe-inspiring sight, and one we viewed with alarm as we knew many homes were located on the valley and we feared for the safety of the people. However, no lives were lost. Much stock was drowned, and damage done to crops and hay in stacks. We never knew how many inches it did rain, but a neighbor had a half bushel measure sitting in the bottom box of his wagon and it was level full—13 inches deep. The water subsided during the day, and during the next night following the rain it was confined to the creek, indicating that west of us up the valley the rain had been much less in quantity. While there was some damage, and a lot of inconvenience, the rain was indeed a blessing in thoroughly soaking such a large territory. A large acreage of wheat was sown; the wheat fields sprang up with good stands of volunteer wheat, much of it being left for crop and made good. Thus, perhaps through this over-sized rain, began a series of years of good general crops.

I again taught the school White Hall, the year 1901 to 1902 and when asked to sign up for the next year 1902-3 I declined as we decided it was just too strenuous a life, to work through the crop growing season, hustle through the chores night and morning and have the work and responsibility of a large school. That spring, 1902, I bid goodbye to the school I especially loved, my old home school, never again to take up the work of teaching.

On December 23rd, 1901, another little blue-eyed baby boy came to make his home with us, to the delight of us all, and especially so to his sister Bernice who was now seven years of age and a lover of children. We named him Dale Dolan, his middle name in honor of my good friend and President while I was in the Bank of Bartley.

The summer of 1902, we had good alfalfa hay, and having mechanical hay tools I put up a large acreage for others on the halves. We had over 300 tons, and to bale all this hay, load and ship to market, represented a lot of work and expense, as I expected to have to do in order to cash it. I remarked to a man in town who had helped me in the haying that I would like to sell it in the stack and would furnish a feed lot, to feed it in. I went to town the Saturday following this conversation and this man at once told me there was an old man by name of Walden, wanting to buy a large tonnage of hay. He was representing Frank Rockefeller, a brother of John D., who had a large ranch up the Beaver near McDonald, Kansas. We looked him up, and after a little talk, I took him to the farm, showed him the hay, and location of the feed lot, that we would enclose to suit him. In a short time we came to terms at $4 per ton, a good price, a dollar a ton more than my neighbor realized net by baling and shipping. This deal was subject to the approval of Mr. Rockefeller. He approved. We enclosed the yard and around 150 coming three-year-old Hereford steers, in good flesh, were driven from his ranch and placed in the yards around the first of October.

A gas engine and Ohio Cutter were bought for the purpose of cutting the hay and finish fattening the steers for market. This was in the days before experiment stations and a knowledge of the substance of alfalfa. I furnished two teams for hauling hay for their feed, and worked on the job, getting $40 per month. After a large bill of expense, and a hard winter's work hauling and cutting the alfalfa, the cattle were shipped to Kansas City as feeders, not weighing as much as they did off the grass. Mr. Rockefeller called twice, staying over night once with us and on the last call he said, when I deplored his loss in the experiment, "Well, Mr. Stilgebouer, I may have less money, but have gained experience and I will never try that kind of feeding again." He was a very fine gentleman and we enjoyed having him with us. He could have bought corn to feed with the hay and made money.

The year of 1903 was one of good general crops; I raised seventy acres of barley—forty bushels per acre—fair corn, a good many hogs in the alfalfa pasture and a large quantity of hay in stack. With the last cut up about the middle of September, things were going good with us.

About that time I received a letter from my good friend of the Bartley days, E. E. Smith, stating he was coming to see me on business. He was quite an extensive cattle feeder, and our thought was, perhaps he wanted to buy our hay, and feed cattle with me in charge. He came, we visited and looked around until noon hour and dinner was over. Then he said in the presence of my wife, she being a very close friend of Mrs. Smith, "We may just as well get down to business. I have come to get you folks to move back to Bartley and Mr. Stilgebouer to take charge of our bank." I had never given up or overcome the desire to get back into the banking business, and when Mr. Smith so whole-heartedly made his statement, I felt not unlike the maiden lady, who had longingly looked forward to her heart's desire and when the proposal came, exclaimed, "Oh! this is so sudden." That thought came to me and I smiled. Mr. Smith remarked that he was very happy to see me taking kindly to the proposal, judging by my smile. I then told him of my reaction, and we all laughed. We discussed the matter from every angle, first he telling me that Mr. Vickrey had sold his interest to them—he and the doctor—and that Mr. Vickrey wanted to seek a location of greater opportunity and take his son in with him. I suggested to Mr. Smith that having left Bartley might work against me on holding and gaining business. He assured me that there was no family would be more welcome and he had heard so many substantial farmers say they wished Mr. Stilgebouer was in the bank again. "Rest easy on that, we all want you." As I was not to take charge until January first there was no hurry in making up our minds. I told him we would think it over and if we decided to consider it favorably, write him, and he could arrange an evening meeting with Dr. Hathorn when we could discuss it in full detail. He said before leaving that he would buy my hay, and bring over a bunch of cattle to feed it to, paying me for the work. I only had what grew on the home farm, around 100 tons; hay of less value that year.

He then left for home and Rosa and I thoroughly discussed and weighed every angle of the proposed change of our life's work. Two things helped us to decide; I preferred the job to that of farming and Rosa, never very strong and being very ambitious, just simply worked too hard on the farm, there being at that time a lot of hard work in the primitive way. We were doing all right financially and in a position to do much better, so the decision of a life change was not easy to make. I asked Rosa to be frank with me and tell me what she preferred to do. She replied with a smile, "I prefer to stay here with you, or go with you; either job is yours, and do what you think you would like best as your life's work. My job will be the same, here or there, making a home for you and caring for our children, and I can be just as happy either place." We talked it over with my father and mother and her mother, her father having passed away in 1895, and they encouraged us in going, for reasons stated, so I arranged a meeting, discussed the job, and settled on wages and we agreed on me ultimately getting one third the stock at book value. Two things I had distinctly understood, one was—no interest charge above the legal rate, and the other, I was to be the manager. All commitments in the making of loans by me, and when I did not suit them in the line of results and sound management, to fire me. They, after my explanations, agreed my position was sound. We agreed on a five-year job at a stated wage and I could have my share of the stock whenever I wanted it, they each releasing a proportionate share. This settled the matter, Mr. Smith bought the hay, we sold out our holdings at private sale and moved back to Bartley December 31, 1903, into the home of my former cashier, Mr. Frost, later purchased by Mr. Vickrey and we purchasing it to be our home.

The years spent on the Beaver were years of advancement by our people, good homes being erected, the town of Danbury growing, our friendships so happy and pleasant, that we were saddened by the parting, but in a manner, we were going back home, for we were happy to have the privilege of again living with and renewing the friendships of the years gone by, and I again their banker and in a job I loved.

Soon after taking charge, I received a letter from Dr. Dolan stating his pleasure on my again taking up the work and happy in the opportunity to again renew our former very pleasant competative and reciprocal relations. This letter from a former employer I greatly prized and have it yet.

Chapter XXXIII

1904 — Banking Under My Personal Direction

HERE we find, according to general tables of expectancy, thirty years of future, with 36 years behind him. Now in the settled profession of banking at 75 he has overcome that limited expectancy by 9 years and from 75 a basic expectancy would make 5/9 of his life following his definite change to his chosen career. His bank statement is an eloquent endorsement of his course. To this might be added that he lives in near center of the middle northwestern states where in a comparison for longevity is found a higher rate than in any other group of states or subdivision in the union. It adds something like 3% above the average of the nation. A strong feature of this chapter is a clear cut conservatism in banking against the patent medicine features that spring up to make security, wealth and profits by intuition or the terms of Townsend, which would make wealth by seizing the perspiration products of those who toil. He was not of those who put great confidence in wishful thinking, indolence in middle life, and then grow old waiting for sixty. The bank guarantee of this century, especially in the West, was much in his mind, like the Mississippi bubble, or the tales of Col. Sellersigh finance. It worked well until by its own momentum, banks began to fail and it took its place with the Europen War money issues, or transmutation of base metals into gold indulged in the early centuries. This chapter shows the author's firm stand for sound money and sound and successful banking.

* * *

On January 1st, 1904, it being a holiday, we audited the bank, Mr. Vickrey, Mr. Smith, Dr. Hathorn and I all being present. When the audit was completed, I was elected cashier and placed in full charge, the only employee on the job. The books were similar to those we had in the old bank, all pen work. A journal was kept in which was written the name of each depositor, and amount, also the name of the maker of each check and to whom payable and amount. To get totals of the deposits and checks, those were added mentally, and totals transferred to the day book or counter book, as then called; when a balance of the day's work was obtained, then all postings to depositor ledger, discount register, and general balance book were made and general totals verified with the sum required in the general balance book; as yet no typewriter, adding, or posting machine in the bank, all hand and mental work in all of its business transactions. It was my custom to sort checks and deposits and get all in readiness for posting the next morning, often going to the bank as early as six a.m. owing to the work, usually at seven a.m., and have the books all in shape by nine a.m. when the bank opened to the public. I made it a rule to not return to the bank of an evening except in a case of emergency that I might have my evenings with my family. It is so easy to be imposed on by some of the banking public in trying to arrange an evening for their convenience, and realizing this by my former experience, I let it generally be known that I, like other folks, expected to have my evenings with my family, free from the work and responsibilities of the bank. This has been a cardinal principle with me in my banking career to our joy and satisfaction in the home, and I am sure very little if any inconvenience was caused the general public.

So many of my former customers called on me, that my return indeed seemed like coming back home. However, many new people had moved to our locality and it was pleasant to greet them and form their acquaintance. My wife was also renewing the former friendships and forming new ones and we were both happy and pleased with our whole-hearted reception, both in a social and business way. The bank directors had permitted the income from the insurance business to be retained by Mr. Vickrey as part of his compensation and on his retiring from the bank, he took the business with him. I had to build it up from a beginning. I secured the agency of a couple of companies, St. Paul and Columbia, and soon obtained a nice line of business as a lot of new building was being done. I also did notary work, wrote deeds and mortgages and legal papers. I took charge of some non-resident farms on commission basis, made collections for machinery companies, made real estate loans for a loan company and did a number of things all supplementing the loan income of the bank; I preferred a stipulated and fixed salary and that my working time be in the interest of the bank and all profits to belong to it. It has occurred to me that a statement of the bank at the close of business on December 31, 1903 — as it was when turned over to me — would be of interest, so through the courtesy of A. B. Wood, the now president of the Bank, I have a copy as of December 31, 1903, December, 31, 1916 when I sold my interest to him, and December 31, 1940 and now insert them as reflecting not only the growth and progress of the bank, but the growth and progress of the town and community as well. Also the general growth and prosperity of Southwest Nebraska.

Statement of State Bank of Bartley, Bartley, Nebr., at close of business on dates given below.

Assets	12-31-1903	12-30-1916	12-31-1940
Cash & Due from Banks	$ 14,642.25	$ 63,911.89	$ 77,271.47
Loans and Discounts	19,506.87	126,180.53	173,623.28
Bonds & Securities			70,024.73
Overdrafts	53.79	124.30	29.08
Banking House, Furniture and Fixtures	2,336.14	4,700.00	2,665.40
	$ 36,539.05	$194,916.72	$323,613.96
Liabilities			
Capital Stock	$ 7,500.00	$ 15,000.00	$ 25,000.00
Surplus	1,500.00	3,000.00	25,000.00
Profits	714.50	3,905.92	7,257.01
Time Deposits	2,015.35	59,286.87	125,162.14
Demand Deposits	24,809.20	112,634.21	141,194.81
Guarantee Fund		1,089.72	
	$ 36,539.05	$194,916.72	$323,613.96

We moved our membership back to the M.E. church in Bartley and we were active in that organization all the years we lived there. I, as a trustee, a steward and treasurer of the church, and Mrs. Stilgebouer as an active member of the Ladies' Aid. She was an active member of that organization in the several communities in which we have lived and always enjoyed the work, and in this active association made many friendships she prized very dearly.

On February 29, 1904 another little boy came to our home, our fifth and last child, desired and anticipated, but to our great disappointment, he passed away on the day of his birth and we laid the little frail body in the Bartley cemetery, there to await a resurrection to a life immortal. We both loved children, not only for their own sake, but for our sake as well in their loving companionship and the innocent influence on our lives, and on each other in the family circle. Thus five children born to us, three were left. Our hearts sorrowed, but the realities of life were to be met and for the good of all concerned, we met this misfortune with fortitude and resignation and carried on, as we all must do when parting with our loved ones.

We were more than pleased with our return to Bartley, from a social standpoint, and the business grew with a rapidity far greater than my hope or expectation. Good crops, fair prices, hogs and cattle replenished, I surely was one busy man. New customers and new accounts, both in the deposit and loan lines, until at the end of my first six month the assets had reached within only a few dollars of $100,000.00. I was indeed happy that the banking business of the territory was coming home. With this increase in business in all lines, profits were more than pleasing and I knew the sooner we secured a part of the stock of the bank, the better it would be for us, both from a financial standpoint and my position before the public as a director and stockholder. The semi-annual meeting at that time came in November, the bank having been organized in the month of May. This was before the uniformity since brought about by law as of January and July each year. As our business had grown so much, I felt that we should increase our Capital stock to $10,000.00—I taking $2,000.00 of the increase and paying in my proportionate share of surplus. This I proposed at the meeting and it was unanimously agreed on, Dr. Hathorn and Mr. Smith dividing the extra $500 between them. I do not have a statement of the business at that day's close but it was as to Capital $10,000.00 and $2,000.00 surplus. Through the increase some few years later to $15,000.00 capital and $3,000.00 surplus, I secured my third ownership in the bank as agreed I should have, when I took the management.

The years 1904-5-6-7-8 and 9 were all good normal years in the production of general crops, and livestock—hogs and cattle—were produced and fitted for market correspondingly. There was much improving being done on the farms of a substantial nature, better homes, barns and sheds for livestock, better equipment with which to operate, and a surplus being built up by the frugal in the line of increasing bank deposits. We shared in this general prosperity. The towns of the county were also sharing in this advancement in the way of new homes, business houses and general increase in variety and stocks of merchandise. The automobile was just arriving, but no tractors or combines, trucks or expensive operating machinery. The farms were family-sized farms, raising their own power and feed for that power, largely exchanging work with each other as needed, hauling their own products to market, and the general results were that their productions were their own.

June 30, 1908 our son, Solomon W., and Pearl Ritchie, a former schoolmate, were married and to this union on June 3, 1910 a son, Lowell F. was born, he being their only child, all three of whom are living and in business in Sidney, Nebr. For some time before he was married, he was employed in the bank with me and continued in the bank until the next spring, when he became a farmer. He quickly became familiar with the work, was kind and courteous to the trade and was in every way making good in the bank. The long hours and confinement affected his health, the outdoors beckoned, he loved farming and stock, and the larger part of their married life has been on the farm. It was while he was with me that I experienced my second bank panic.

The so-called "Roosevelt Panic"; it occurred during his second administration. For some time in the fall of 1908 there was wide speculation on the stock exchange, many issues selling far beyond their possible earning capacity, which should have been a danger signal to the investors and speculators. This condition continued until the banks of New York and the larger cities decided to call a halt in making loans secured by stocks and bonds and slow down the trend. As is usually the case when credit is tightened, some one gets pinched and in this case, the pinching at first was largely on the speculators and brokers who held larger blocks of stocks and bonds, and when they began to sell it created a bearish runaway market. Many of the larger banks held stocks and bonds as security on loans and when the margins were getting thin, they, too, began to sell their collateral securities to avoid a loss. People are like sheep, the masses follow their leader, and as speculation to some extent was general and stop losses desired, the market was demoralized and spread to runs on the banks. Early in November, I knew New York was having trouble as disclosed by the press, but as we had no money invested in stocks or bonds or secured by them I thought, 'well, it can't hurt us. We have good crops, large stocks of cattle and hogs, a good big reserve, prices good' and in fact were "sitting pretty." How mistaken I was. Just as surely as a severe injury to any part of the body would disturb the poise of the individual, a panic in New York would disturb the poise of the nation and affect every individual in it.

Our semi-annual meeting was in session early in November, Mr. Smith and Dr. Hathorn present, when about the middle of the forenoon, I was handed a telegram which read, "We will ship no more money until further notice, a letter follows, signed Omaha Nat'l. Bank." The facts were that good-sized runs were starting on the larger banks and in order to stop them the New York clearing house of banks made a rule to pay out no money and instead of money, issued clearing house certificates which did the people no good to hoard but could be used as cash, hence most of them refused the certificates and left their money in the banks using their checks. This practice became general in nearly all the cities having clearing houses and soon spread over the United States. Again, as in the 1893 panic, I was uneasy and wondered how best to handle a withdrawal situation that would probably arise. I discussed the matter at some length with the other two members of the board and they had no solution to offer.

I finally requested that they meet with me the next morning at eight a.m. and we would have the letter which might be a guide as to procedure. They came and the letter stated that anyone having money in the bank could pay by check and check clearances would be as usual and only pocket cash be paid out in case of emergency, not to exceed $100 and they would be judge of the emergency. They recommended in the form letter that all correspondent banks limit their payments to $25 or less in cash and give the holder of a good check a draft for the difference. If our own customer, let him deposit the draft and use his check book except for a little pocket cash. They said by following this routine we no doubt could have our cash last us until the panic was over. If we needed small change up to 50c pieces, they would ship us limited quantities. I ordered $300 in change only once and by this method increased our cash over the period of about six weeks that the banks suspended cash payments.

Some incidents worthy of note occurred during this short period. An elderly gentleman had a sizeable account subject to check and did not come in for several days, although he lived in town. When he came as was his custom he asked if he could draw $25; he got it. He then told me that he heard a man in town say that he drew all his money just before we suspended cash payments and was glad of it for the bank would surely go broke when restrictions were removed. As he told me his name, and the man was then talking to some men in the street I stepped to the door and called them in. The old gentleman started to leave, so I asked him to remain and see that fellow squirm. When they came in I called the fellow by name and told him that when I cashed his check for $25 it created an overdraft of about $10 and as I might need that and the sum represented in his loan, around $800 on his cattle now due, I expected payment in full in a short time. Did he squirm? I then told him I knew how he had talked, which could injure our bank, and of one thing to rest assured; our bank was here to stay. We had good realizable loans, his among them, and that I was not renewing or extending the time of payment of any of them, but would call them if I needed money. He, after that, was one of our best boosters. The call-down spread over the community, to his humiliation.

Another incident; The Free Methodists, a very emotional people at that time, were holding afternoon meetings on the street and for several afternoons occupied the bank corner. A farmer customer who had a good checking account, on coming to town, became alarmed, and thought there was a run on the bank. When he came in he told me how my congregation appeared to him. I said to him that it had been very annoying in trying to work, but had not given the matter that consideration. After this service, I said I would try and change it to the vacant corner across the street. When the service closed, I called the preacher and explained to him the misconception my customer had and that if he had been passing through on the main road, he might have put the wrong interpretation on the crowd, as a run on the bank. Would he kindly have his people move to the opposite vocant corner? He would and did, very kindly. The panic was soon over and no date ever set for full payment. We began paying all small checks and soon were cashing all checks. Our currency increased during the early weeks of the panic, we had a surplus of cash and were glad to pay out. The results to our people were the same as the Panic of 1893, a deflation in values which was very noticeable to us all. By the middle of December produce and hogs began to move to market and business was as usual, but less in returns by reason of price. In the light of my knowledge and experience in this panic I think the New York banks in the suspension of cash payments, though censured, acted wisely and well and held the losses down to a minimum, that otherwise could and would probably have been heavy on our people and the nation as a whole.

There were very few bank closings as a result of this panic and none in our county or state that I now recall. With the panics of 1873, 1893, and 1908 all within the memory of most of us, and all of them resulting in a tremendous loss in deflated values of property suffered by the people generally, leaders began to discuss ways and means to avoid their recurrence. William J. Bryan, a political power of that day, with others advocated a method of protection to the depositor, the most of which was to be paid for by the banks and with this guarantee fears of loss would not arise.

The election in the fall of 1908 resulted in the election of a democratic governor, A. C. Shallenberger, and a democratic legislature. Thus Mr. Bryan and his followers had fertile soil in which to sow the seed of Guarantee of Deposits, and bring about the passage of such a bill.

I, having been in the banking business during two panics and having experienced the lack of confidence and deflation of prices during such times, with its resultant losses, was hopeful that some sound method could and would be devised and become a law providing such protection and confidence. When the bill known as the Depositors' Guarantee Fund was presented, I wrote to our representative and secured a copy. To me, after careful study of the proposed law, it lacked vital essentials of protection as it apparently had no safe-guards at all necessary to its intended purpose. Some of the safe-guards that I thought should be incorporated in the bill were as follows: Give the superintendent of banking power to refuse a charter to organize a bank in territory which already was adequately served by the existing bank or banks. If a bank is needed in a territory grant a charter only to men of known honesty, character, reputation and ability to properly manage a bank and then issue a license to the manager or managers without which a bank could not be chartered. The object of these two safe-guards is obvious: First, that a bank should have sufficient territory and clientele to make a profit without which no bank can long survive, and second, that it would be honestly and capably managed. Also to give the superintendent much more authority in supervising bank management. I, being a Republican and a small-town banker, felt I would have little influence with the banking committee but I had a delightful acquaintance with two leading democrats—ex-banker, Gov. A. C. Shallenberger, and ex-superintendent of banking, Dr. P. L. Hall, then a banker in the capital city, Lincoln. I wrote them both. The governor replied that my suggestions were sound and should be incorporated in the bill. Dr. Hall wrote he had been before the banking committee, had advocated similar and other sound measures to be incorported in the bill but feared the lack of experience of the banking committee would pass the bill to the house practically as introduced. For the information of the reader a copy of the material part of the law in which there were no safeguards now follows:

323 Sec. 44 *Guarantee fund.* For the purpose of providing a guarantee fund for the protection of depositors in banks, every corporation engaged in the business of banking under the laws of this state, shall be subject to assessment to be levied, kept, collected and applied as hereinafter provided.

324 Sec. 45 *Same—assessment.* On the first day of June, 1911, and on the first day of December, 1911, and on the first day of

June and December of each year thereafter, every corporation engaged in banking under the provisions of this article shall make and file with the state banking board a statement in writing, verified by the oath of its president, vice president or chashier, showing the average daily deposits in its bank for the preceding six months exclusive of public money otherwise secured. And on the first day of the month next succeeding the date fixed for the making and filing of such statement, the state banking board shall levy assessments against the capital stock of each of said banking corporations as follows: On the first day of July, 1911 one-fourth of one per cent of the average daily deposits as shown by the first statement of such average daily deposits required to be made and filed by the provisions of this section; on the first day of January, 1912, one-fourth of one per cent of the average daily deposits as shown by the statement required to be made and filed on the first day of December, 1911; on the first day of July, 1912, one fourth of one per cent of the average daily deposits as shown by the statement required to be filed on the first day of June, 1912; and on the first day of December, 1912; and on the first day of July and January of each year thereafter, one-twentieth of one per cent of the average daily deposits as shown by the statement thereof required to be made and filed next preceding such assessment: Provided, however, any bank commencing business and receiving deposits less than six months prior to the date when the statement referred to in this section is required to be made and filed, shall show the average daily deposits for that portion of the said semi-annual period during which it has been engaged in business and receiving deposits. Any person making oath to any of the statements herein required, knowing the same to be false, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred, nor more than one thousand dollars, or be imprisoned in the penitentiary for a term of not less than one nor more than five years, or both.

325 Sec. 46 *New banks—deposit for fund.* Any bank organized subsequent to the date when this article takes effect shall pay into the depositors' guarantee fund four per cent of the amount of the capital stock, when such bank opens for business, which amount shall constitute a credit fund, subject to adjustment on the basis of said bank's average daily deposits, as shown

by the first two semi-annual statements required by the next preceding section. The banking board is authorized and empowered to make such an adjustment of the rates of assessments to be paid by any bank which engages in the banking business subsequent to the time when this article takes effect, as shall require such bank to contribute to the depositors' guarantee fund, a just and equitable sum, and the state banking board shall adjust assessments of such bank so that the first two assessments, together with the credit of four per cent of its capital stock paid in by said bank when it begins business, shall at least equal one per cent of the average daily deposits of said bank as shown by the two first semi-annual statements required by the next preceding section: Provided, however, said four per cent will not be required of new banks formed by the reorganization or consolidation of banks that have previously complied with the terms of this article with reference to the payment of assessments.

326 Sec. 47 *Assessment—levy—notification.* As soon as said assessments are respectively levied, the banking corporations against which the same are levied, shall be notified of the amount of such assessment levied against them respectively, by the secretary of the state banking board and said banking corporations shall thereupon set apart, keep and maintain in their said banks the amount thus levied against them and the amounts thus levied, kept and maintained shall be and constitute what shall be designated as a depositors' guarantee fund, payable to the state bankboard on demand for the uses and purposes hereinafter provided: Provided, when the depositors' guarantee fund reaches the total sum of one and one-half per cent of the average daily deposits, said assessments against the deposits of said banks shall cease until such time as the guarantee fund is depleted below one per cent of the average daily deposits, when the necessary assessments may again be levied: Provided, further, no bank which has complied in full with all of the provisions of this article shall be required to give any further security or bond for the purpose of becoming a depository for any public funds, but depository funds shall be secured in the same manner that private funds are secured.

327 Sec. 48 *Special assessment.* If the depositors' guarantee fund shall, from any cause, prior to July 1, 1912, be depleted or

reduced to an amount less than one-half of one per cent of the average daily deposits, or subsequent to July 1, 1912, be depleted or reduced to an amount less than one per cent of the average daily deposits, as shown by the last semi-annual assessments statements thereof filed, the state banking board shall levy a special assessment against the capital stock of the corporations governed by the provisions of this article, to cover such deficiency, which special assessment shall be based on the said average daily deposits, and, when required for the purpose of immediate payment to depositors, said special assessment may be for any amount not exceeding one per cent of said average daily deposits in any one year.

I have purposely copied the guarantee fund law that the reader may become familiar with its requirements and method of operation. I have called attention to the fact that when the law was in the making, we bankers attempted to get safe-guards, naming some of them, but none are in the law. Any set of men, three or more, who paid in the capital required could organize a bank and the Superintendent was powerless to refuse a charter regardless of the lack of need of the bank or experience on the part of the proposed management. The confidence in banks of that day was largely in the personnel of its management and that was largely true up to the time of the passage of this law. Under this law it was assumed that one bank would be as safe for a depository as another and, relying on this assumption, a multitude of new banks would be organized, and wreck the guarantee fund. This ultimately proved to be true. The bankers brought suit to test the constitutionality of the law, as providing insurance where the insurer had nothing to say about the risks or safeguards. After the Supreme Court of the State passed on its constitutionality it was declared by them to be valid under the Public Welfare and Police Rights law and as such should be enforced. The bankers, that is, the state banks, regardless of management or condition, automatically became members and paid their assessments. The national banks were not subject to the law, nor could they become members, as the state banking department had no jurisdiction over them. Some state banks nationalized, and some national banks surrendered their charters and became state banks, owing to their viewpoints regarding the Guarantee Fund, as to its possible effect on their business. After going into operation it seemingly worked smoothly and well and the public began to appraise it as a Panic Panacea. No more panics. Banks were now all alike, safe depositories. The sequel for later record, which was tragic indeed.

I have mentioned that the years 1904-5-6-7-8 and 9 were all good normal years of crops and progress. Now we were to have a slow-down. 1910-11 and 12 were years of deficient rainfall, or not coming at the right time, and as a result crops generally were short. Some wheat, barley, oats and corn but generally regarded as very poor, much corn being shipped into Red Willow county from more favored localities.

During those years we shipped in many carloads of corn for use in our locality from Benkelman, Dundy county, Nebraska and naturally this added expense, cut possible profits, and for a time limited the growth and progress of our county.

It was the year 1912 that we were again called on to give up in death another of our children, Dale Dolan. He had been in very poor health for several years, and all that we and physicians could do, did not seem to reach or alleviate his trouble. In August, 1912, he took typhoid fever and in his frail condition could not combat the disease and soon passed away. We laid him beside his sister Lizzie in the Danbury cemetery. Those who have made a long and serious effort for the health of their loved ones, can best understand our thoughts and anxiety during this long, trying period, but do what we could, health was not to be his portion and in his passing, we love to think that a happy reunion was made with his sister Lizzie and that their little hands, over the years, have been beckoning us to higher thoughts and nobler deeds.

In the spring of 1913 our daughter Bernice graduated from our 12th grade accredited high school, having received the first position in her class. It was her desire to enter the state university in the fall, which she did. She was the last of our children at home and when gone, we were indeed very lonely. She loved her work at the university, wrote us every day, as did her mother or I to her, and these little chats by mail were indeed helpful in our loneliness. This correspondence was daily during her four years in college. She attended the state university two years, taught in the Bartley High School two years and then back to the university to finish, which she did in mid-winter 1919, having attended Stanford University, California, a summer session in 1918.

The rains again came forth and a series of good crop years began in 1913. One evening during Christmas week of 1908 Mrs. Stilgebouer and I were sitting in our home, talking and thinking that the 25th milestone of our union was fast approaching. Dr. J. E. Hathorn called, visited a short time, and then said, the evening was so nice, he would like to take us for a ride in his new automobile. He had previously said that he wanted to take us for a ride, so neither of us had any conception of his purpose, other than a ride. Mrs. Stilgebouer put on her coat and hat as she was, in work clothes, and we were soon off. After driving us around quite some time, he was passing the Methodist Church and turned in and stopped. We noticed that many teams of buggies and wagons were tied to the hitching posts and quite a few cars in evidence. I remarked that there must be church service. I did not know anything about it. Dr. replied, you and Mrs. Stilgebouer get out and we will go in. Service evidently has not started yet. We went in, without a thought of the real purpose of the gathering. On opening the door, we discovered the auditorium was packed with members, neighbors and friends, all rising in a body while we were escorted, by the usher, in front of the rostrum.

From there on our minister, the Rev. J. F. Hagaman, took charge. He asked the audience to be seated, and then reminded us of our 25th anniversary approaching, and that this occasion was to honor us and that happy event.

After a ludicrous mock wedding, in which we were victims, that carried the audience to a jolly mood, short talks were made by both men and women, songs were sung, and at the close of their prepared program Mrs. Stilgebouer was presented with a beautiful set of chinaware, flowered with roses and violets, the speaker saying, in harmony with your name, and the flowers you love. The program over, then it was visiting hour, and a most enjoyable time was experienced by us all.

The blessings of friends and neighbors in health and sickness is beyond the dollar value to us all.

A picture of Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Stilgebouer taken on their 25th wedding anniversary.

The World War started in 1914 and the awful carnage was on which lasted until Nov. 11, 1918, after drawing our own country into it in 1917. Millions of fine men on all sides were killed, maimed and health broken, seemingly all to no purpose in the light of what is taking place today, 1940, in Europe.

It is a sad commentary on human intelligence that differences cannot be settled amicably without resorting to force. That war is so recent, it is my purpose only to mention incidents that vitally affected our lives then, and we are still suffering from its effects and maladjustments today. One of the immediate results of the beginning of the war in 1914 to our county and all others as well, was the increase in farm prices, which was also soon reflected in the price of farm purchases.

A seeming prosperity was ushered in for agriculture, but only to the frugal were there lasting benefits. We had good general crops in 1914-15 and 16 and tilled land and much new breaking was farmed to the utmost and crops sold at profitable prices. People generally, deploring the war, were cashing in on its requirements. Our business of banking was growing, the prices naturally reflected in the deposit lines and larger loans required to make purchases.

Chapter XXXIV

1917 — Location in Banking

TO SERVE his early banking friends with change he took a change of venue back to Indianola. This was a prudent move in combination of clear right and enlightened self-interest. The author briefly touches on the first World War and President Wilson's slogan "To make the world safe for democracy." He asks the cryptic question: "Did we?" That is no longer debated, neither is it debated as to what was the real reason for entering that war.

* * *

My business associates on the directorate and majority owners of stock, were as fine men in their habits and relationship with each other and me as one would care to meet, and the only difference that arose in our association with each other in directorate of the bank was in the compensation of my help. As our business grew, naturally I required help and I trained five different clerks on a scarcely liveable salary. Humiliating to me and a lot of overwork, and unsatisfactory to the help. As soon as they were proficient, they passed on to better-paying jobs and I was left to make another selection and start "school" all over again. This in the face of the fact I was already overworked — all pen posting, and an adding machine only the last three years, '14, '15 and '16. In my thirteen years, I had but two vacations almost of necessity for health's sake and to rest my eyes. Not that they were not willing, but I knew the work required me on the job. When I would ask for a raise for the help, I seldom got it as they considered the training they were getting (one at a time) was a valuable part of their compensation. I did not insist, as I would now, but would let it pass and before long was alone again. Later another young man to train. We were making plenty of money so that did not enter into the picture. I did not understand their attitude then and don't now, for our friendship and personal relations were simply fine, never a fault or criticism uttered on our management or results. About this time, midsummer, 1916, Wm. A. Dolan, cashier of the state bank, Indianola, Nebr., called on me and said he had come down to sell out to me. He was a son of my old friend and former president, J. W. Dolan, who had sold a majority of the stock to our mutual friend, L. E. Southwick. He had a statement of his close the day before with him and in analyzing it comparatively with ours, income was relatively proportionate. He said Mr. Southwick left salaries for help with him to pay according to ability and service. He said he wanted to go to California where his father lived and was sure Mr. Southwick would approve the change to me as his successor. I told him we would think it over, and if we decided to go into it, I would go and talk it over with Mr. Southwick. He then named his price, which seemed in line of its value.

After talking it over with Mrs. Stilgebouer, we decided on the change, if it could be worked out as I desired. I called on Mr. Southwick and he approved and said if I had difficulty in selling my stock in the bank, he would buy it at the same price I was paying for Mr. Dolan's stock and help me with additional funds if I required any. I then asked him about salaries and he said to set them myself. I told him I would do that with the help and my reasons, but wanted him to name my salary. He named it the same as Mr. Dolan's, a $1000 more a year than I was getting. All things agreeable, I returned and called a board meeting and laid my plans before them. I also told them they could buy my stock if they wanted it and this they decided to do, if I did not change my mind which they both hoped I would do. I told them to be on the look-out for my successor for I would not change my mind. It was a much better deal for us than to remain there. I was reluctant to sever the business relations with my associates, for outside of the difference on compensation for help, we agreed perfectly on all matters of policy. They were both very fine men and our friendship was close and sincere as long as they both lived. Both now deceased many years.

We were also reluctant in severing the close relationships with our good personal friends in Bartley, but felt that this was a good and desirable change for us from two standpoints. Financial and health. I had for some years been on the job too strenuously, I was noticing eye strain by overwork and physically was not up to par. My work would be much less eye-exacting, very little counter work as I retained the two employees then in the bank, C. S. Quick, Jr. and Miss Marie Foley. Dr. J. E. Hathorn and Mr. E. E. Smith secured Mr. A. B. Wood, whose term as county treasurer closed January 1, 1917, to take over my stock and position. He spent a week or ten days with us in our home and at the bank, each day getting written and oral instructions relative to the customers, borrowers and their obligations.

I told him then that he could only see the notes and securities but that a year from now, he would lift his hat to me for the sound and well-secured notes turned over to him, and the training as to honesty in sales of chattel security in turning in the proceeds, and the fine attitude of the borrowers toward their obligations and the bank; later he lifted his hat. About January 10, 1917 he was elected cashier and placed in full charge. He is still in charge now, 1940, as its president and has a well-balanced bank as disclosed in his December 31, 1940 statement and has served Bartley faithfully and well over the years.

In 1892 we first moved from Indianola to Bartley and now we were moving back to Indianola to take charge of its leading business house and fully realizing our new responsibility. In moving to Indianola we purchased the home of Mr. Dolan and were at home to our friends. I was elected cashier of the state bank, retaining C. S. Quick Jr., assistant cashier and Miss Marie Foley, the bookkeeper.

As Indianola was only seven miles west of Bartley, I personally knew most of its people in town and surrounding territory, having worked as deputy county treasurer, and thus gained an extended acquaintance. By this time Woodrow Wilson had been re-elected president and all signs pointed towards the U. S. entering the war against Germany. In April, 1917 congress thus declared, and we entered it wholeheartedly to save democracy. Did we?

Crops of all kinds were good, prices very high, one of our customers realized $3.15 per bushel net for wheat shipped to Kansas City in early spring, 1917, and prices of other products were in proportion as to our sales and purchases. Land values were rapidly rising, deposit lines increasing, likewise reflected in larger and increasing loans. The general conditions seemed prosperous, but were they? We were treading on dangerous and inflationary ground. All our farmer customers were receiving and handling much larger sums of money, many were getting in debt deeper, without concern on their part, new and unnecessary banks were being chartered which, with the inexperience of the managers and the lax and inefficient supervision, laid the foundation for the wreckage that took place when some years later deflation, which was inevitable, set in.

Chapter XXXV

World War and Other Events

AS EVENTS carry to more recent days hasty retrospect aside from the author's modest references to his participation in matters of farming, banking, teaching, church and school, the reader will be thrilled with the many activities in or near his first Nebraska home, where profited by his enterprise almost daring the certainty amazed, at his industry and perseverance in behalf of parents, brothers, sisters, and the community, in all of which his hands found to do, were with his might and always with good and laudable purpose followed by no culpable failures. He selected his friends coming from Fillmore and Saline counties. His passing from student to teacher and reverse to banking followed no rainbow for pot of gold. Gold is seldom found. It is usually dug or toiled for. It was earned for his associates, his family and himself. His loss in hog cholera was an exception, but later practical and diligent farmers found these great mortgage lifters immune, but that is another story.

* * *

After the declaration of war and the draft was in force, I spent a part of my time, as required, in assisting the draftees in making out their questionnaires. This was done gratis, as I felt it but just to help the men who had no choice in the matter, without charge. I was chairman of our territory in the first Red Cross drive and when organized, visited every section of our territory, I taking a personal part in soliciting. We went over the top, as we did in all subsequent drives. A goodly number of our men in Red Willow county and our community were leaving in the early fall of 1917 for training at Camp Funston, a camp wholly unprepared to receive them, and many avoidable deaths occurred through this lack of preparation for their comfort and care. It is greatly to be hoped that the present draft of men, 1940, will not meet similar fates and conditions.

Liberty bonds were being sold generally, the first largely taken by the banks. F. A. Pennell, cashier of the First National Bank of McCook, was the county chairman in the first four bond issues sales, the county given a quota each time that seemed impossible to meet, but under his able organization each of the four went over the top. Mr. Pennell had given so much time to the Four that he refused to act and organize for the Victory Bond sales, telling me it just could not be put over. Without my knowledge, I was appointed chairman of the county by the state chairman at Omaha and requested to attend a meeting of all the county chairmen of the state to be held in Omaha, Nebraska. I went. A lot of fellows who had been having this responsibility felt it could not be put over and so expressed themselves. After much discussion the chairman called on me and I gave an optimistic talk, stating reasons why we should get strongly behind the drive, principal of which was to raise the money to get our boys home. We all went home and did the job, Red Willow county maintaining her proud record of doing more than asked for.

I was chairman of the Council of Defense in our territory during the war. An incident occurred that I think worthy of mention. As is always the case in every time of stress, there are some "would-be patriots" trying to gain favor by tearing others down. This condition even reached into the faculty of our own state university. We had a German settlement southeast of Indianola and a church as the center of their community. Disloyal rumors were being circulated and some of them reached me, but I gave them no credence. One day a German lady, whose son was then in camp, came to me and said their minister was going to suspend German church, and preach; sing, and pray only in English. She knew very little English, understood it less, and said that such action was taking her religion away from her, now when she needed it most for her comfort. She further stated that she did not know how to pray in English. Pathetic in the extreme. This conversation was in German as I passably speak the language. I said to her, "Don't worry, I will write a letter to your preacher and you are to take it to him." In the letter, I gave him full authority to continue his services religiously as he had been before the war, in German and English, assuring him the constitution gave him that right, and to set his congregation at ease, as there could no trouble arise, and I regarded this to be his patriotic duty as religious freedom is not abridged by war. Also I assured him I would protect him in his rights if called on. I sent a copy of my letter to the county chairman, Patrick Walsh of McCook, Nebr., and received a reply approving my action. They continued their religious service as usual and the "would-be patriots" could but consider themselves "small potatoes and few in a hill."

One of our boys died in camp, another was killed in action somewhere in France and some others crippled and gassed. There was great rejoicing in our community when the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918 and we hoped a lasting peace would result—"vain hope." We expected prices to begin a gradual decline but such was not the case. The good crops of 1918 and 1919 sold high, land values rose in harmony with its production prices in all agricultural states, until there seemed no rule or reason in the cash values thus created.

Dent E. Galatin, a former schoolmate and friend of our daughter, Bernice, was principal in the Bartley High School the term of 1917-18 and he, like all other single men, was in the draft and in line for the call to the colors. Camp Funston had such an over-crowded condition as to its facilities and such a bad reputation as to health conditions, they did not want to be sent there for training. To avoid this, early in May, 1918, Dent E. Gallatin, Joseph H. Smith, David McDowell, Leo E. Ryan, John H. Teter and his brother William Teter, all Bartley boys, decided to enlist with privilege of being sent West for training. They were outfitted in Fort Logan, Colorado, and sent on to Camp Fremont, California for intensive training in the arts of war. I knew them all from their early childhood, as fine a bunch of young men as one ever meets, all usefully and gainfully employed, and it seemed a pity that the flowers of young manhood should thus be plucked from the up-building and advancement of society and be trained in tactics of war and destruction, all brought about by foreign potentates in their lust for power and expansion. We have its counterpart in the conditions of today and God only knows the final outcome and its results. It is certain to disorganize the world in so far-reaching a manner that future generations and their children cannot escape the results of its ravages and costs in our way of life and its treasure. Again it is brought about by the lust for power and expansion in overriding and destroying smaller neighbor nations in Europe and subjugating them as vassal states. It is greatly to be hoped that the aggressor nation can and will be conquered before civilization itself is destroyed.

When the Bartley boys were established at Camp Fremont, near Stanford University, our daughter Bernice very much desired to attend a summer session in Stanford and thus be near and meet Mr. Gallatin on occasions when he was at liberty. Her one statement was sufficient to us in giving our consent. It was, "Folks, he may never come back, and I do so much want to meet him before going, when possible." After her arrival and registration she soon formed a delightful acquaintance and friendship with the Dean of Women, in whom she confided her desire as to meeting Mr. Gallatin on appropriate occasions. The dean graciously gave her every courtesy and helpfulness in her power. When the summer session was over she returned home and after a short rest went on to the Nebraska University to finish in midwinter and obtained her A.B. degree, majoring in English. Mr. Gallatin and his five companions finished their training and about November 1, 1918 entrained for Camp Lee, Virginia, there to embark for France. Happly indeed, the armistice was signed on Nov. 11 with the most of their outfit still in camp and awaiting departure. Discipline before the signing was naturally very strict and liberty non-existent. After the signing of the armistice, discipline was relaxed, liberty granted and our boys visited numerous places of interest in the territory, among which was New York City, all of which they greatly enjoyed and to their profit in the retrospect.

Mr. Gallatin was appointed acting Supply Sergeant, his duties being to make a record of all physical equipment of his company and deliver the record and equipment to the general headquarters of supply. This duty detained him in the camp and he did not receive his discharge until February 27, 1919. On his return, after a short rest and visiting period, he accepted a position as assistant cashier in our bank. He loved mathematics, in which banking deals, quickly mastered the routine and rudiments of banking, and was soon going in full stride as one of the bookkeepers and tellers. He had taught school in our north territory and thus had an extended acquaintance with a good many of our customers, all to his advantage.

On October 26, 1919 our daughter Bernice and Mr. Gallatin were married and began their home-making near us. We were happy in this consumation of their love and did not feel that we had lost a daughter, but had gained a son, for as such, he has ever been to us and still so remains. On December 15, 1921 a son was born to this union, they naming him Bruce Eugene. We were all very much pleased and especially so, his father and mother. We were then living on the farm and when Dent phoned us, Mrs. Stilgebouer asked if I could leave my work and go and see him. I asked "when," she replied "now." I told her to get ready, I would get out the car and we would soon be on the way. On arrival, strange as it may seem, the "little fellow" did not seem to know us, but the love-light in his mother's eyes and expression on her face and the face of Dent, made the trip doubly worthwhile. We expressed our pleasure in meeting their son, and the hope that he would be a joy to them and grow to be a useful and respected citizen. We now had two grandsons, thus to some extent compensating us in the loss of part of our children. We were indeed happy and soon on our way home.

Mr. Quick had been employed in the bank eleven years before I bought in and had recently said to me that he thought he should have had the opportunity to purchase the bank when I bought in. This was about July 1, 1920. I had never been able to get a hold on the customers as I had in Bartley and this was not to my liking. They would go to Mr. Quick, he having waited on them for so many years, and stand back saying they wanted to see him. When he spoke of purchase I said to him, "If agreeable to Mr. Southwick, I will sell you my stock for the same price I paid, and in the four years I have added $9000 surplus. Think it over, you know the bank and have made the most of the loans." He replied, "I don't need to think it over. I will buy and it is worth more than you ask, but don't care to raise your price."

His father had extensive holdings around Indianola, was afflicted with a lingering illness, from which some years later he died.

I felt that the bank did not need two managers and manager salaries and as I had a valuable farm needing improvement, I decided to do that and sell in. In the meantime my health also was in line for improvement as my eyes were still subject to strain. Mr. Southwick approved the change but stated when I improved and disposed of the farm he would have, or we would create, a place for me. Early in July, 1920, we drew our contract of sale receiving $5000 down and balance January 1, 1921. We moved to the farm late in March and farming and reconstruction work began. We spent the year 1921 and until August, 1922 on the farm, rebuilding the home, fences, and removing old sheds and useless buildings. When the work was completed the farm and home surroundings presented an attractive and prosperous appearance. The second summer, with four horse team, I made a full hand and had a good crop in the making, mostly corn. It later husked out 40 to 60 bushels per acre. Early in August, 1922 my real estate agent in McCook brought a purchaser. He was a local man there who had sold out in the high time and had the cash. We sold him the choice part of the farm, 310 acres, including the improvements and crop at a satisfactory price and invoiced machinery, horses and mules at fully their sale value.

In the fall of 1921, I had bought a number of choice registered Poland China brood sows and gilts as a foundation herd. We had a sizable increase and as they were attractive and thrifty, we held a public sale that netted us very pleasing results. Now, once again I was out of a job, but this time I preferred it so, for a rest and change period at least. We had not left the farm yet when I received a wire from Mr. L. E. Southwick asking when he could see me and where I would be. I replied that I was coming to Lincoln soon and would call upon him. This I did and he desired to connect me with his bank at Friend, largely as an outside man. As this would take me from home more or less, it did not appeal to me. He then asked me to keep in touch with him and we would manage our association in business satisfactorily. This

I was pleased to do, but I said I would like a couple of months before again assuming responsibilities.

About the last of August, 1922, our daughter Bernice Gallatin came down with typhoid fever. She seemingly recovered from the fever, but it left other complications. Mr. Gallatin naturally was very much concerned as were we. Later, their little boy Bruce also contracted the fever, and that he might have better care and less disturbance to Bernice, Mr. Gallatin employed a nurse in McCook to care for him in her home. He recovered from the fever but it also left some complications hard to overcome. Bernice did not gain, in fact seemed to be growing weaker until on the evening of November 19, 1922 she passed away, leaving Mr. Gallatin and us filled with sorrow and a loneliness indescribable. She was a dear good wife, mother and daughter, talented and capable, not only to be missed by her husband and son, her immediate family, but by intimate friends, in her church, and the community as well. We laid her away in the Bartley cemetery near the town where she was born, there to await the "Son of Righteousness to descend to collect the ransomed dead," in whom she had an implicit faith.

On October 22, 1922 I had taken employment in the bank of Benkelman by request of Mr. Southwick and my job was to take full management and save from loss as much as possible. The deflation beginning in the fall of 1920 hit this and many other banks severely, which had over-expanded. At that time there were two banks in Haigler, one in Parks, three in Benkelman and one in Max, an over-banked condition and unjustified, with unsound competition prevalent in most of them. With the long strain of the sickness and death of Bernice, Mr. Gallatin did not feel he could do justice to his job as assistant cashier in the bank and resigned. He and we decided for us to take the little boy, Bruce, at least for the time being, and care for him, which indeed was a labor of love to us.

As I expected to be needed in Benkelman for perhaps a couple of years, we moved to Benkelman and I settled down to the most responsible and exacting job in my life, in trying to save for the owners every dollar possible and as prices were low, loans—many of them—were beyond the ability of the makers to pay, the attitude of some of the borrowers very unhappy and non-cooperative, it indeed was a sizable job. The manager retired and I had been elected assistant to the president, Mr. L. E. Southwick, and took full charge on October 22, 1922.

Little Bruce, at times, would have severe distress in his weakened stomach, left so by the fever and we were greatly concerned as to his eating and results. Through December he seemed to gain, was such a bright child and had such a lovely expression, similar to his mother, that our hearts went to him in love as our own child. When going home of a noon or night, the little fellow seemed so happy on my return, that his companionship to some extent compensated and lessened the grief and loneliness in the loss of our daughter, Bernice. He still had attacks of severe stomach pains, but less in duration and farther apart. On the evening of January 25, 1923, he played with his grandmother, as was a usual custom and at eight p.m. took his prepared milk, and was soon asleep, Mrs. Stilgebouer placing him in his little crib. We were visiting, and in about fifteen minutes he gave a scream; Mrs. Stilgebouer ran to his crib, picked him up and brought him to me. He was then in a severe convulsion. She at once called our doctor, who came quickly, but on arrival pronounced life extinct. He passed away in my arms, without a revival from the convulsion.

His father was in Arkansas visiting his parents, depressed in body and spirit over the recent loss of his wife and the breaking up of his home and life's plans. It was indeed heartbreaking to need send such a wire as must be sent. The passing of this sweet little boy, after the recent loss of his mother, was tragic in the extreme to us all. We laid him away beside his mother in the Bartley cemetery. No use to attempt to record the feelings of all of us in our loss of Bernice and Bruce. It simply cannot be done. We, the living, must carry on and do our work and trust that time would assuage our grief. Mr. Gallatin and his brother-in-law and family went to Casper, Wyoming where he worked a few years in the oil refineries, making him home with them.

My work in Benkelman was of so intensive and exacting a nature that the days quickly passed. Not so with Mrs. Stilgebouer, whose work now was very light and quickly done. In her beautiful philosophy of life, one would not know by her action or countenance that she had so recently given up those who were so near and dear to her. I could not help showing my sorrow at times, for Bernice had been such an affectionate daughter, kind and thoughtful, always giving us her first consideration when at home. After her marriage she and Dent, while we lived in Indianola, were daily callers and after moving to the farm some twenty miles distant, made a visit to us at least once a weak. Mrs. Stilgebouer said to me one day, "Papa, why so sorrowful? We cannot call them back, but in time we can go to them. We have each other and can still be happy." This helped, for I feared that she, like me, was silently grieving but kept it from me. I believe now, that her implicit faith in the promises of God was her solace and comfort in our family misfortunes.

I continued my work until May, 1925 when, with additional funds paid in by the owners and additional funds above that by Mr. Southwick, we got the bank to meet the approval of the Department of Banking. Then, as two of the men formerly employed in the bank and working with me, associated with others, wanted to buy the bank, Mr. Southwick decided to sell, which he did. I was retained for the balance of the year 1925 looking after outside interests acquired by Mr. Southwick, on which sizable sums were realized. During these years after deflation set in, in the fall of 1920, and values of farm products remained low, many banks were voluntarily closing, others closed by the Banking Department, until such closings were indeed numerous, and wrecking the Guarantee Fund. Assessments were increased to the maximum, one per cent a year on deposits, until with receding profits and losses of their own to eliminate, the assessments were indeed burdensome and almost confiscation of the property of the going banks. In many instances to my knowledge they were paid, profits lacking, by the stockholders contributing according to their stock. As the Legislature in special session in 1929 passed a law to examine the records and ascertain if possible the cause of so many failures, and the methods of their liquidations, and as the banking-experienced and very able ex-governor A. C. Shallenberger was appointed chief examiner with power to employ expert accountants, I will at the chronological time insert copy from his report. I will add now, however, that when the value of securities was reduced 50% to 75%, as it was in a very short time, it certainly was a very material cause, and this drastic deflation covered the farm belt as well as industrial America and naturally played havoc with people's ability to pay, and the closing of banks. I also insist that the guarantee fund law itself, was a contributing cause of failures in lulling the people generally and the banks into a false sense of security and in the lack of provisions for its own preservation by the limitation of banks to the justified needs, and the licensing of managers in the new and competing banks where justified, thus assuring capable and experienced management.

Chapter XXXVI

Banking

IN OUR rural banking system the standing of a community, to considerable extent, depends upon the character and strength of its bank or banks, and that in turn takes them to one dominating individual, usually the president. The business and financial weal or woe of that community hangs upon the fitness, the ability and the confidence inspiring bank president or manager. And fortunate has been the communities in which the author operated, in that they collectively profited by his conservative bank managements in which he still lives, works and strives.

A large part of this interesting chapter is historic in character and well worthy of being read and re-read.

* * *

I again entered the banking business on my own. We had made many business and social friends during the three years of our residence in Benkelman and were reluctant to leave and seek employment or business in a new and strange territory. In early fall of 1925 I was informed by the president of the Max State Bank, with whom I had worked and who was now president and one of the owners of the bank of Benkelman, that his cashier wanted to sell his interest and that most of the stock of $10,000.00 could be bought, including his. I checked over the assets of the bank and its deposit lines, a goodly line of business from Benkelman, which I felt we could hold as well as Max territory, and became interested in its purchase, but desired to associate Mr. D. E. Gallatin, my son-in-law, with me in its personnel and ownership. I took the matter up with him, he still being in Casper, Wyoming and it was agreeable with him, leaving it all to me as to the purchase. In the late fall I signed a contract of purchase, to take possession January 1, 1926. Mr. Gallatin came about December 1st, 1925 and became a worker in the bank to familiarize himself with the routine and become acquainted and renew acquaintances, as some years previous he had been principal of their schools. The last of December, 1925, we moved to Max, seven miles east of Benkelman, and Mr. Gallatin became cashier and I the president, we owning 81 per cent of the stock. We both knew most of the customers, were received very kindly and the business moved along very satisfactorily. Mr. Gallatin made his home with us, which was very pleasing to Mrs. Stilgebouer and me—to have our son, for such he has ever been to us—with us again. The year 1925 we had good crops in southwestern Nebraska and prices were again remunerative in both cattle and hogs, which was helpful to all concerned.

We transferred our church membership to the Max M.E. church, I taking membership on its board and serving as its treasurer. Mrs. Stilgebouer became active in the Ladies Aid of the church as she always did in every community in which we lived, and enjoyed being helpful in this associated work, and especially enjoyed the rich friendships formed with the ladies of a kindred spirit.

The year 1926 was an unusually dry year in southwestern Nebraska and as a part of our territory was hard land, very little corn was raised on it, feed was short and it became necessary to sell many cattle and hogs, but as prices were remunerative, we did not feel the results of lessening of the normal supply of stock materially until the next year. The years 1927-8-9-30-31-32 were good normal years of crop production in southwestern Nebraska and prices of stock and crops were generally satisfactory except 1932 crops, which we will speak of later on.

During the fall campaign for the presidency in 1928, I recall a radio speech made by candidate Herbert Hoover in which he spoke of the great prosperity of the American farmer and American industry and in which he said, I quote, "Poverty is forever banished from our land, and every American workman seeking a job, can find it in his line and get it at remunerative compensation." How much we lack, even in high places, in being able to intelligently predict the future. At that time, there were and had been, silent forces at work, that brought about the most drastic deflation and distressing panic America ever knew, finally resulting in the closing of all the banks in the United States in the first days of his successor in 1933. As was the case in 1908, and producing the panic that fall, so again a wide speculation on the securities of industry began early in 1928. Senator Carter Glass realized the danger and twice on the floor of the Senate warned the nation that it was drifting rapidly towards dangerous grounds. He suggested that the president recommend to the governing board of the Federal Reserve Bank that it make drastic restrictions on loans made by its members, for speculative purposes. "Silent Cal" broke his silence to say that he did not regard the loans as being over-extended, that from information received, he regarded the loan policy and condition of the banks as healthy and sound. Later, I believe he must have seen the "hand-writing on the wall," for he issued his famous message, "I do not choose to run."

Speculation continued until as in 1908 stocks and bonds were selling far beyond their possible earning capacity and on a speculative value only. Bankers during this period, even many in the so-called small towns, were having their New York correspondent banks place this character of loans for them until the crash came in 1932 and billions were lost and millions of men thrown out of employment. More about this later in its time and place.

We were going along very satisfactorily and had increased our surplus from $2000 to $6600 by 1930 out of earnings, besides dividends annually to our stockholders. February 11, 1930, we added Miss Opal M. Maxwell to the personnel of the bank, who from now on will have a part in this narrative. She soon became familiar with her assigned work and this addition to the working force gave Mr. Gallatin and me much more time for outside work helpful to the bank. Our deposit lines were increasing. The majority of our deposits being time deposits, we thought best to invest some of it in Government Bonds 4¼—4th issue Liberty Bonds—buying during the spring and summer of 1930 $22,000.00 worth of them and $6000.00 in Federal Land Bank Bonds, which were placed in the Lincoln State National Bank, Lincoln, Nebraska, for safe-keeping, a bank we used as a correspondent bank by reason of my early-day Red Willow county friend, George W. Woods, being the executive vice-president. Mr. Woods resigned his position in this bank to accept the position of State Bank Commissioner of the state of Nebraska, having been appointed to this most responsible and trying position by Governor Weaver.

For many years, the State Bankers of Nebraska had been trying to amend the banking laws, so as to get the banking business out of politics. This was finally accomplished under Governor Weaver's administration, and Mr. Woods was appointed for a term of six years, beginning his work May 17, 1929. I have at various times referred to the examinations of banks, all done in one day by one man, which at best could but be a superficial audit. No just or equitable appraisal of the loan values could possibly be made in the time allotted, which was unfair to the examiner, the department, and the bank. I recall that in a letter of congratulation to Mr. Woods on his appointment, that among other things I said, "I believed that now under his supervision and the new law, that we would enter a constructive period in banking; that it would be valuable to the banks to be examined by capable and constructive examiners and thus add value in public confidence towards all banks." I was not disappointed in his able and constructive work and have always with pride referred to him as one of my home-town boys. Had he had sound banks to supervise he would have kept them in condition, and while many had closed, many others were in a hopeless condition. His job was a full man's size job and one, knowing him as I did, which often must have tried his soul. He worked constructively with the bankers and through his wise counsel and supervision assisted many weak banks back to soundness. Others hopelessly over-expanded, naturally closed. I now insert extracts from chief examiner ex-governor A. C. Shallenberger's report to Governor Weaver.

Extracts from the Final Report of the banking investigation authorized by house roll No. 585 beginning May 2, 1929 and ending Aug. 1, 1930, by Ex-governor A. C. Shallenberger who had been appointed chief examiner by Governor Arthur J. Weaver.

General Purpose of the Audit.

"First—the audit of a sufficient number of banks to determine the cause of the many bank failures in Nebraska and to secure evidence of law violation if any by bank officers that would result in the punishment of the guilty offenders.

Second—to investigate the liquidations and disposition of bank assets and to protect so far as possible the interest of the depositors.

Third—to investigate and report on the work of the Guarantee Fund Commission as adminstrators of the affairs of failed banks.

Fourth—to investigate and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the supervision and examination of state banks, as conducted by the Department of Trade and Commerce."

In harmony with those objectives and in line of authority vested in him the Chief Examiner employed the Associated Certified Public Accountants of Omaha, Nebraska. Three of the managing partners were directly in charge of the audit and making all reports to the chief examiner.

The investigation covered the entire field of state banking in Nebraska. The Guarantee Fund Commission was the chief agency of the state for the liquidation of failed banks during the period covered by this investigation. The Commission first organized and took oath of office May 4, 1923.

"The commission was authorized to re-open failed banks, receive and pay out deposits without regard to the solvency of the institution. Every bank so operated showed a continual monthly operating loss and few re-organizations and sales of closed banks resulted from this policy. Delayed liquidations were only profitable to those in charge of them."

"The operation of banks by the Guarantee Fund Commission resulted in the payment of millions of dollars of discriminations and preferences in paying depositors. Governor Weaver pointed out, in his statement when convening the extra session, that in 73 banks operated by the Commission there were preferences paid some depositors to the amount of $5,000,000.00. It should be said that the commissioners claim that before December 1, 1927 it was represented to them by the Department of Trade and Commerce that losses would finally be paid in full from the Guarantee Fund: All unequal preferences in payments to depositors were discontinued after December, 1927. The audit first disclosed the magnitude of these discriminations."

The Chief Examiner then gives a series of statements, figures and facts perhaps of no special interest to the reader. One set of figures, however, I feel to be of general interest, showing the magnitude of the drain from the banks as shown by the assessments levied from June 3, 1911, when the law became effective, to January 2, 1930—19 years—$19,811,378.83. As reflecting our fears of no safe-guards to the Guarantee Fund in the possible organization of multitudes of banks where not needed, or lack of sufficient customers to assure a profit and the licensing of capable managers, I quote from the report: "From 1909, when the guaranty law was enacted, to 1925 when a long series of bank disasters began to undermine the Guaranty Fund, deposits in Nebraska State Banks increased almost 500%. The increase was from $62,000,000.00 to $272,000,000.00. During that period 91 banks closed but depositors suffered no loss. From 1919 to June 30, 1930, 353 state banks were closed in Nebraska. There were 615 state banks in operation in 1908. By 1921 the number was 1009, an increase of 394 banks. On June 30, 1930, 602 state banks reported to the Department of Banking, a decrease of 402." On December 31, 1940 there were 284 state banks reporting. The figures given as to failures mean tragedy all along the line, as to depositors and most of the bankers. Many bankers, as the deflation so greatly depreciated their assets, sacrificed their private fortunes in paying assessments but to no avail, with the ultimate closing of their banks. The loss to the depositors in many cases reduced them to penury and want, as they relied on the Guaranty Fund for ultimate protection. With no safe-guards, I never regarded it as an ultimate protection, never referred to it in advertising and personally considered it the bunk, as misleading both to banker and depositor, as lulling them in a false sense of security. I again quote from the report of Chief Examiner Shallenberger: Quote—

The Guaranty Law.

"Banking laws, no matter how sound and carefully drawn, will not be effective in protecting the interests of the depositors and the public, if bankers are permitted to continually violate their most important provisions. The Guaranty portion of the banking laws of Nebraska established an insurance for the protection of depositors. The annual assessments for the payment of losses were based upon federal reports of the average losses in national banks during the life of that system since it was established in 1862. For fifteen years before the war boom multiplied the number of banks and inaugurated an area of speculation, failures were few, depositors lost no money and public confidence in our state banks was complete.

Three sound banking principles were essential to the success of the Guaranty Law, if the insurance plan was to prove sound and safe.

First—Limitation of bank charters to the requirements of business and safe credit of the community served.

Second—Bank earnings of sufficient amount to insure a fair return and the charging out of losses that come in periods of business depression. No bank that can honestly show a fair profit ever fails.

Third—Competent and efficient supervision and examination by the department in charge of the administration of banking laws and requiring from all officers and managers of banks a state license certifying as to their honesty, ability and character. Failure to observe and enforce these essentials undermined and wrecked the Guaranty Fund.

The World War inflated prices, both of land and other property, to such an extent that a business boom developed which swept many bankers, business men and even farmers into a maelstrom of speculation. Standards of value and normal bases of credit were completely lost sight of and sound business principles were forgotten. Banks were increased in numbers until competition brought disaster because there was not sufficient safe and profitable business for all who were fighting for it. Land speculation, a most dangerous economic disease for bankers to contract, became epidemic either through loans on land or by indirect purchases by bank officers. The fall in value of farm property has swept away supposed securities and caused a serious destruction of credit. Federal statistics show that agricultural values shrunk eight billions in one year. Only the strong, careful and experienced banker could weather this storm.

During the war boom period 315 additional state banks were chartered. In the year 1917, one hundred and two more were chartered. The courts decreed that, under the existing law, the State Banking Department could not refuse charters. This decision denied to the state's officers a power essential to the safety of banking and the security and sufficiency of the Bank Guaranty Fund. The legislature later passed a law giving the authority to the Banking Department to refuse charters for good cause, requiring officers in management of banks to secure a license from the Banking Department certifying the banker's ability and character. This law was suspended by a referendum petition and later was defeated by a vote of the people. Subsequently, hundreds of banks were chartered for which there was no economic use and men permitted to operate them who, for want of ability and honesty, have disgraced the business of banking. Too many banks and too few bankers bred bankruptcy in the banking business.

The irresistible economic law that unprofitable banks must finally fail or discontinue has reduced the number of state banks to the requirements of banking and commerce. The law now permits the Banking Department to judge as to the need for a bank in a community and as to the ability and character of the officers.

Administrative Improvement.

During the year this office has been investigating bank failures, their causes and results, great improvements have taken place both as to bank management and administrative supervision by the Banking Bureau. Under the management of the new banking commissioner, Mr. George Woods, our banking laws are being enforced. Past abuses are no longer permitted. As a consequence, failures are few and should soon be a thing of the past. Restoration of sound banking is rapidly building the foundation of public confidence and credit, which is essential to public prosperity.

One of the most important advances made in supervision is in the character and thoroughness of examinations. All notes and bills receivable are examined and classified and listed so that a banker has an inventory and statement of the value of the contents of his note case and the Bureau of Banking has this classified list of notes for its information. Examinations that were formerly made by one man and were to hurried to be thorough, now require two examiners working two or more days to complete them. All expenses of examination and supervision by the Bureau of Banking including the Banking Commissioner's salary are now paid by the banks."

We were still troubled with the guarantee fund, which was now, with so many failed banks, a burden indeed to the going banks, until the legislature assembled in special session in 1930 through its chosen representatives repealed the law, and in its repeal created a new, unfair and obnoxious law, known as "Depositors Final Settlement Fund." It was a law in which an annual assessment was to be made on the going banks of one-fifth of one per cent on the deposits. The intent and purpose was to create a fund over a period of ten years for the payment of a percentage of the losses sustained in failed state banks. A number of banks refused to pay the assessments at all, we paid for a time and we quit, later recovering as ours the sum retained.

The Final Settlement law was so plainly unconstitutional, that it was virtually taking the property of another to pay the debts of insolvent debtors; so burdensome on the going banks if put into operation; that the bankers again resorted to the courts, and this time they won. The court upheld the contention of the bankers, declared the law unconstitutional, and thus 'finis' was written on a sad chapter in Nebraska State Banking.

I still feel, that had the safe-guards been placed in the law by the politicians that we requested, that the occasion for writing this chapter in banking history would not have materialized.

Chapter XXXVII

1930 — Lincoln Robbery, a $2,000,000 Robbery in Which We Were Victims. History Follows Rise and Fall of Banks; Change in Laws.

DARING were the outlaws of the early days in Western Nebraska. But perhaps more daring was the famous Lincoln robbery in 1930 which is recounted in chapter 37. It affected many communities through their deposits in the Lincoln bank, having been made unavailable. The author's bank suffered, but its depositors did not, and that is the crucial test.

Banking interests of the state thinking to aid in bank recovery from the Bank Guarantee folly, reduced the bank stockholders liability to the same basis as in general corporations. That is to say, instead of double liability it was reduced to single liability and it will be recalled that the bank argument for the reduction was that it was so in many European countries and the United States had lead the way for the change.

One trouble with America is its readiness to copy after foreign countries in some of their laws, systems and social habits. This chapter will be valuable to the readers, because a large part of important facts in the beginning and the end are set forth and may well be heeded by the numerous readers of a man in the community who guided his bank through difficulties to safety in the interest of those who had trusted him with their funds.

* * *

Lincoln Robbery.

On September 17, 1930 Lincoln, Nebraska, was to experience the largest bank robbery, as to its results, known in all the history of American banking, and in which our little bank was one of the victims and sufferers. About 9:15 a.m., a few minutes after opening, several men came into the bank, guns were quickly drawn and the personnel of the bank were told it was a hold-up and what to do. There apparently was nothing to do but comply with their demands. The tills were quickly robbed of the cash and they demanded the opening of the bond safe. This was done and they secured a safe full of bonds among which were our $22,000 Governments and $6,000 Federal Land Banks. This robbery was referred to at the time as a two million dollar robbery. I never knew the exact sum in cash and bonds they secured but I do know they got our $28,000.00 worth. Along in the summer I had written Mr. Dungan, the cashier, in reference to insurance as a matter of our protection. He answered by telling me of the splendid safe they had in which they were kept, that the safe was only opened before hours to the public, and then closed until after public hours, that only two people employed in the bank knew the combination and that no one in Lincoln carried such insurance, and for us to go along with them as we had been. Such was the substance of his letter; I filed the letter and thought I would go down soon—too late. September 17th came and with it the robbery. With the surplus and profits we then had it required $20,000.00 to restore our bank to solvency. When I told Mrs. Stilgebouer of our loss and its results, our part to pay in being $10,200.00, she said, "What are you going to do?" I replied, I wanted to save the bank if possible but it would take most of our life's savings to do it, as we had experienced other heavy losses during the deflation period in sizable sums due us and depreciation of property. She immediately replied, "Let's save the bank if we can and I am with you to our last dollar." As the bank with which we did business sold their remaining assets and guaranteed the deposit lines to the Continental National Bank, it was up to me to make new contacts. We needed to borrow most of our part, so I asked Mrs. Stilgebouer to go to Lincoln with me and we would first talk it over with the banking commissioner, Mr. Woods. This we did. He, himself, had a sizable block of joint stock land bank bonds stolen. I told Mr. Woods that if I could not arrange while in Lincoln with reasonable assurance to get my part needed, I would have to close our bank. This he naturally deplored very much, but under the law, neither of us had any choice in the matter. We must restore our bank by paying in $20,000.00 or close.

It was my intention in going to Lincoln to contact Mr. George W. Holmes, president of the First National Bank, with whom I had some acquaintance and who was familiar with our past banking record through our mutual friends. Mrs. Stilgebouer and I called on Mr. Holmes, and he was very kind and receptive to our condition and needs. Mrs. Stilgebouer said to him that she was with me, would sign the note and all that we had would, if necessary, be used in repayment. Mr. Holmes replied that he would take the matter up with his board, and would soon let us know results. He, I was sure, desired to help us, and when he was returning, I knew by his expression that we would get the loan, a sizable sum, and part of the collateral was "character." With our ability to pay in $10,200.00 and Mr. Gallatin ready to pay $6,000.00 it still left $3800.00 for the stockholders to pay, so we went home and contacted them and they all came through like the gentlemen they were, one of them saying, with what Mr. Gallatin and I were doing, they certainly could do no less than their share. All arrangements were quickly completed and the money paid in to take the place of $20,000.00 of the bonds stolen.

In a short time, a Mr. Berlivik of Des Moines, Iowa attempted to sell a block of governments to Allyne & Co. of Chicago asking cash, among which were $5,000 of our governments. The clerk in the office was a watchful man and asked to see his bonds. As Allyne & Co. had a list of the stolen bonds, a list having been sent to all banks and dealers in bonds, he quickly discovered these bonds were on the list. He told Mr. Berlivik he would prepare a copy of them and Mr. Allyne would be in soon and on his return would go with him to the bank to get the cash. Berlivik asked for his bonds and said he would call later. The young man insisted on making a list and requested him to return soon. When Berlivik left, this young man contacted the police and when Berlivik returned they arrested him. He stated he had received them from another party to sell for him and did not know they were stolen. We soon received our part of them, $5,000 worth, and suitably rewarded the young man. Berlivik later had a preliminary trial in Lincoln, as a party to the robbery, but by lack of evidence was discharged. I now copy a letter our bank received from Mr. Woods, the banking commissioner. Quote—

STATE OF NEBRASKA
Arthur J. Weaver, Governor
Lincoln

October 21, 1930.

Mr. F. G. Stilgebouer, President,
The Max State Bank,
Max, Nebraska.

Dear Forster:

I have your letter of October 18, and certified copy of the Minutes of your meeting of the Board of Directors held on October 18, 1930.

The Department accepts and approves your plan which you have worked out to repair the damage to your Capital structure wrought through the robbery of the Lincoln National Bank and Trust Company.

May I take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation and commendation for the fine attitude of your stockholders in this trying matter.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,
Department of Trade and Commerce.
Geo. W. Woods
Bank Commissioner.

GWW:D

Some time later Gus Winkler, who greatly resembled one of the robbers, was arrested and brought to Lincoln, Nebraska to stand trial as one of the robbers. Mr. Max Towle, the then prosecuting attorney, realizing that he did not have sufficient evidence to convict, began a very extensive investigation and ascertained by conclusive evidence that Mr. Winkler was in New York on the day of the robbery. Mr. Winkler being fearful that he might be railroaded, so to speak, to a conviction, admitted that while he did not have part in the robbery, he did know leaders in the "underworld" in Chicago and believed he could contact them and recover the stolen bonds. This he agreed to do at a very nominal cost, to be paid to the underworld. He also said that he knew that all registered bonds of Federal Land Banks and joint stock land had been destroyed but felt sure he could furnish conclusive proof that they had been destroyed so that their owners could get duplicates. This information being obtained by some of the officials of the bank and Mr. Towle, leaked out and reached and appeared in the Daily Press. It created considerable adverse criticism of Mr. Towle, if he did not go ahead and prosecute Mr. Winkler. As in the case of Mr. Berlivik, he undoubtedly had guilty knowledge but was not a party to the robbery, and Mr. Towle, the fine conscientious prosecuter that he was, being loth to place the county to a large expense in a case when he knew sufficient evidence was in the hands of the attorneys for the defense to defeat any prosecution, in the face of the criticism and popular clamor for a trial, squashed the indictment and the judge turned Winkler loose. At times in some lives, it takes more manhood to do one's duty than to follow popular clamor; this was the case of Mr. Towle. After Mr. Winkler was released the Lincoln officials of the bank assured him his proposed contacts must be made, or he would again be arrested. Mr. Winkler seemed to be a very timid and much concerned man to be, as no doubt he was, one of the "fences" of the underworld.' There was no cooperation on the part of the U. S. Government in tracing, locating, or furnishing any information regarding their stolen coupon bonds.

I wrote to the Treasury to ascertain if any coupons had been cashed and the source of their receipt, or bonds cancelled for re-issue, as registered ones, giving our kind and numbers. I received a reply "That the government had made no appropriation for searching the records." This was final as to any help from the government. Not so in the case of the Federal Land Banks and Joint Stock Land banks. These banks joined with the owners of the stolen bonds, in every cooperation possible, letting it generally be known that any stolen bonds must be traced and proven as to the source obtained in order to obtain payment of them or interest coupons. They were simply too "hot" to sell by the "fences of the underworld." Hence Mr. Winkler's knowledge of their possessors and that they might be obtained at a very nominal sum. Some time passed and we began to fear nothing would come of it. All of us who had bonds stolen had agreed with the officials of the Lincoln bank, that we would pay our percentage cost of any recovery made. We were indeed pleased when receiving a letter that our Federal Land Bank bonds representing $6,000.00 worth were recovered with others in Chicago, presumably through Gus Winkler, (although he was never personally contacted after leaving Lincoln, Nebraska) by one of the officials of the Lincoln bank. Our share of the cost was 10% or $600.00, leaving our loss in the Lincoln robbery $17,000.00 apparently never to be recovered. It was my understanding that all coupon bonds except governments were thus recovered and that definite and satisfactory information was furnished as to the destruction of registered bonds which permitted the issuance of duplicates to their owners under the law.

As to Mr. Berlivik, a few years later he killed a man in his pleasure resort and was sent to the pen for life. As to Mr. Winkler, he was shot to death in front of his own home in Chicago some years later, supposedly by some of the underworld. Again a proof that crime does not pay.

Two other men were arrested as participants in the Lincoln robbery and were convicted by a jury after a long and expensive trial and sentenced by the presiding judge to a suitable term according to the law and thus "finis" seemed to have been written on the Lincoln robbery. But was it? The robbery was ten years ago and recently these two were up before the Pardon Board, pleading for a parole, but instead the Pardon Board shortened their term of sentence, which will make them eligible for parole some years sooner. Recently, our bank received a letter from our very able and efficient secretary of our association, Wm. B. Hughes, in which he stated, "Many banks were desirous of our association offering a reward for the arrest and conviction of bank robbers." He asked for our reaction on the proposal. I replied that I was not in favor of any such reward, but that I would favor a reward to the Pardon Board if they would keep them there, serving out their term of sentence according to the judge's decision, after he, hearing all the evidence, observed the witnesses in their testimony and heard a guilty decision rendered by an impartial jury. I think the only shortening of the term of a criminal should be that provided by law, it being earned by good behavior.

Our loss in the Lincoln robbery did not become public for many years. Mr. Gallatin and I feared at the time, had it become known, our customers might think our bank was not sound, and start withdrawals from the bank and that even if told we had restored it to soundness, they might think it was not human nature to put up $20,000 to save $10,000. To us, it was more than that. It was the character back of it in carrying out the honor and trusteeship of our great responsibility. There is no business I know of that to so large an extent measures its success or failure in public confidence, as the banking business, and that is one of the reasons that severe penalties are created by law to protect the banks against false and damaging reports. All this time, Miss Maxwell, working with us since Feb. 11, 1930, knew things were not natural, that something was wrong. She has since told me she feared that something she had done, or had not done, had created our displeasure and was frankly miserable. I did not know her then as I do now, or I would have told her of our misfortune. In my early life, I heard a Scotchman say, "Son, what is too good for you to keep is too good for a friend to keep." We felt it vital this loss should be kept within the confines of the stockholders, and as they were few in number, this was done until some years later when no harm could or would be done by it being known. Our business went on as usual, crops and prices satisfactory, so progress along all lines was being made, but in a general way confidence in the guarantee fund protection of deposits was badly shaken and withdrawal of deposits was more rapid than securities could be realized on, thus causing many bankers in Nebraska to close their banks as the equitable thing to do.

On July 10, 1931, while I was absent on outside business, we were to experience our second bank robbery. Mr. Gallatin, the only one of the force in the bank at the time, was waiting on a customer, Mr. Ball, when about 9:15 a.m. Mr. Clements, a farmer, entered the bank followed by two men with drawn revolvers. The two said, "Hands up, all of you; get behind the counter and lay down." They did, sure, nothing else to do. In about five minutes they had robbed the safe and cashdrawer of all cash and after locking the three men in the vault, were on their way east. With screwdriver and flashlight, Mr. Gallatin removed the vault mechanism and obtained release in time to see them on their way. While the robbery was taking place, a merchant desiring to deposit, on looking in the window saw a man with drawn gun. He went on to the phone office and called the sheriff at Benkelman, who was soon on the job. There were three of the robbers; one remained in the car, it idling, while the other two did their work. We wired and phoned a description of the two men and their car, a large Buick sedan with yellow wheels and car splashed with mud. About midnight of that day the sheriff called us and wanted Mr. Gallatin to go to Denver with him to identify the robbers. On their arrival there the robbers, all three, were in custody, confessed, waived extradition papers and came back with them. They were taken before the district judge in Chambers and after confession and evidence was presented, they were sentenced to the state penitentiary. Two for 18 years, one for 20. That was nine years ago. Two were paroled a year ago and the third this year, by a munificent Pardon Board. One of those first paroled soon committed a shocking crime and is now back for 30 years. Again a fact that crime does not pay.

As we had hold-up and burglary insurance, we recovered part of our money from the robbers and the rest the insurance company paid. No loss to us and only a little inconvenience. I was glad that I was gone, for I do not think I would have enjoyed the hard floor for a pallet, or the sight of the business end of a loaded revolver.

As I was gone until about ten a.m. the day of the robbery, Mrs. Stilgebouer's reaction over the robbery and fearing for my safety, thinking perhaps they had done away with me, produced a severe sickness from which she had scarcely recovered until late in September. Miss Maxwell took charge of her needs, I employing other help for domestic purposes, and it was by this arrangement after her recovery that Miss Maxwell became a member of our family, helping Mrs. Stilgebouer part time, and the bank part time. She was so much like our own daughter, then deceased, in her ways and desire to do kind little deeds for both of us, so jolly, and had cared for Mrs. Stilgebouer so gently and so nicely, that we were both reluctant to give her up, when her services in nursing were over, so arrangement was made for her to become a member of our family as her people were living in the country and not accessible. This arrangement was continued until April 17, 1936 when we sold our property in Max, driving back and forth daily from November 2, 1932 until April 17, 1936, and then we built a new home in Benkelman. On May 29, 1936, Dent and Miss Maxwell were married, and we thus gained a daugher and did not lose a son, for they have ever been as a son and daughter to us, loved and cherished as such. On April 8, 1937, a son was born to this union, the joy and pride of the Stilgebouers whom he calls grandma and grandpa.

When I came to Benkelman in the fall of 1922 there were seven banks in the county, all on the south side ~~of~~ on the Republican river valley. Two at Higler, one at Parks, three in Benkelman, and one at Max. The two at Haigler were consolidated and later were closed. The largest bank in Benkelman, the Citizens State Bank, closed its doors March 1, 1928 having a deposit line of $450,000. Later the Parks State Bank was bought and consolidated with the Bank of Benkelman and on March 24, 1930 the Bank of Benkelman sold out to the Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Benkelman and was thus merged with it. This merger created a deposit line of $640,000 against a capital structure of $31,000. It is my judgment that such a large deposit line, not being supported by an adequate capital structure, added to the lack of stability and confidence, — already lessened by the failure of the Guarantee Fund to pay off depositors of the Haigler and Benkelman closed banks — and thus a gradual withdrawal of deposits was made, making a depository of the Post Office for their surplus funds. This situation continued until September 27, 1931 when, the directors realizing it was unfair to other depositors and that closing ultimately would be inevitable, closed their bank. At the time of closing this bank had $425,750 deposits, a shrinking of $235,000 in eighteen months, and the removing of this vast sum of money from the use of its owners was indeed a calamity to our people generally and the Benkelman territory in particular.

We were the only bank left in the county out of seven a few years before and our feelings after our recent experience can better be imagined than described. We had about one half of our deposits from the Benkelman territory and we knew by reason of that, withdrawals would probably be heavy for use, if not from fear, and we expected both. The Benkelman Bank did not open Friday morning, September 27, 1931 and that morning's mail brought hundreds of small percentage dividend checks from the Citizens Bank which had closed. The road to Max from Benkelman was in constant use all day, people driving down to cash their checks. Several business men came down and opened accounts, likewise some farmers, until at closing time our deposit line, instead of diminishing, had increased several thousand dollars. It was our desire to arrange a credit line with each of our correspondent banks if needed and as we had recently been examined and assets classified, we were in shape to intelligently offer collateral. On Saturday morning I drove to McCook and by telephone arranged with our eastern correspondent banks for $50,000 when and if needed. We also had a long and favorable acquaintance with the First National Bank of McCook, with whom we carried a balance for currency shipments. When I made my desire known to the cashier, asking if we could depend on help to the extent of $25,000, telling him of our other arrangements, he assured me we could and added, that if a run started on us to phone him and he would bring money to us. I am glad to state we needed very little of this help from the banks. With these assurances, I phoned Mr. Gallatin all was O.K., I was starting home and if he ran out of money, I was on the road with more. At noon Saturday, the examiner stopped with the cash from the Benkelman Bank, about $7000, and took a draft for it. By night most of it was paid out on dividend and elevator checks to Benkelman folks. For some weeks the business was daily ship in money and pay checks to the Benkelman folks until dividend checks were cashed or deposited.

The business men of Benkelman, for the convenience of their customers, would take sizable sums of cash, return with checks and the circle thus continued day in and day out, week in and week out. All the while we were reducing our loans to keep pace with our now declining deposits.

Benkelman Post — C. L. Ketler, Editor

Local People Appreciate Max Banking Service.

"The one bright spot in the local banking situation has been the excellent service extended everyone in the matter of securing change and cashing checks by the Max State Bank. All Benkelman business men and practically everyone in the community have been called upon to depend on the management of the Max State Bank for this service and Mr. Stilgebouer and Mr. Gallatin has responded loyally to the demand, despite the fact that it has added to the clerical demand on the bank to a marked extent and the further fact that they have been required to add extra help in order to take care of it. They have carried this added burden themselves and no charge whatever has been made for the service. Without the banking facilities that the Max bank has given the county would find itself doing business under an added handicap and it is needless to say that the management of the Max Bank has the keenest appreciation of the community in the service they are rendering to the people."

Many of the substantial citizens and business men of Benkelman and territory were very anxious that we move our bank to Benkelman, and this I wanted to do, but it was not, that early in the game, the time to do it, if permitted by the banking department. I also knew we would have to increase our capital from $10,000 to $25,000 and eliminate our bank building and part of the Furniture and Fixture account. Early in July, 1932 I went to Lincoln and got the consent from the department to move our bank, with capital increase to $25,000 and surplus $2,500, Commissioner Woods telling me he was pleased for us to do this, we would succeed. It took some time to complete such arrangements, but we did, and I will always feel it to be the greatest compliment of my banking career in the fact that I sold about $10,000, of the stock at $110 per share in the Benkelman territory, a hotbed of bank failures where the people had suffered severely. We purchased a bank building in Benkelman, changed our articles of incorporation as to name, place, and capital, dropping the Max from the Max State Bank—now State Bank—Benkelman, Nebraska, retained the same charter, and moved to Benkelman November 2, 1932. With a deposit line of around $120,000, over half now in Benkelman territory. We started November 3 with $25,00 capital, $2500 surplus and around $120,000 deposits. On the arrival of our bank and personnel in Benkelman, the Benkelman Post, C. L. Ketler, Editor and Publisher, was very kind to us in the welcome and publicity given, I quote:

Max State Bank Moved to Benkelman Wednesday.

"Wednesday was a historic day in Dundy county bank history when the Max State Bank moved its fixtures and transferred its base of operations to Benkelman. The bank's business was suspended for the day and it was the first regular banking day in the county's history when there was not a single bank in operation in the county. But on Thursday morning things had changed again for it was the first time in fourteen months that Benkelman had banking connections within its own corporation lines and that our sister village on the east was without such a connection since along about 1916, when the Max State Bank was organized. But things have changed so rapidly in the last few years and folks are getting used to sudden changes and are learning to adjust themselves to them on short notice.

The bank opened in Benkelman under the name of the State Bank with the same officers and in most part directors that have been in charge of the Max State Bank. Only one new director has been added and that is E. W. Artist. F. G. Stilgebouer is the president and D. E. Gallatin, cashier. Miss Opal Maxwell continues as bookkeeper.

The Bank of Benkelman building has been purchased for the home of the new State Bank and extensive changes had been made in arrangement and equipment, all of which are to the end of improvement over the old arrangement. Carpenters and painters have been busy for several days in making these changes and the building is a credit to both the city and to the bank. The bank's capital stock has been increased to $25,000.00 and the surplus capital has likewise been increased.

The new State Bank not alone brings with it a strong organization but a wealth of experience in banking circles as well. Mr. Stilgebouer has been in the banking business in Nebraska for more than forty years and his banks have always rated among the best. His conservative policy has always been maintained wherever he has been connected with banks and he has never experienced a bank failure. There have been periods of prosperity as well as adversity in the more than two decades that he has known the banking business but he has never permitted his banks to soar in high tide or weaken for such times as he knew would bring low tides. The greatest test that he has experienced in his long experience in banking circles was within the past few years during which time every bank in the county either merged or collapsed until the Max State Bank was the only institution of its kind in actual operation. And in addition to this pressure was added that of the robbery of his bank two years ago. The bandits were apprehended, convicted and placed in prison, but the Max State Bank continued on at the old stand, doing business day in and day out.

Benkelman certainly welcomes the new State Bank under the management of the Max State Bank organization and its directors and stockholders. They are all men of good judgment and financial stability and under their guidance and direction The Post feels that the State Bank will soon become one of the outstanding banking houses of Southwestern Nebraska. Benkelman people and the community as a whole feel deeply grateful to the Max people for their willingness in transferring the bank to this location because of the fact that they felt that in so doing the needs of the greatest number of Dundy county people would best be served. It takes a generous people to look at it from that view-point but the Max folks have proven themselves plenty big for the job."

Chapter XXXVIII

1932 — Deflated Values. Many Bank Failures.

DEFLATED values. A near political chapter in the reminder of the loss in values following the World War and a few years succeeding. Nebraska being the most essentially agricultural state in the United States in that it has practically no mineral wealth, has limited water power and the field and the pasture are the basis of its wealth, or cause of its lack. We hear much from high and low political sources that the great danger to be dreaded and avoided is inflation. Most people are agreeable to that statement if it is kept upon the level, but if the mountain peaks are exalted and the plains are depressed it becomes a decidedly different proposition. When the cry was strongest against inflation and the products of the plains were complained of without inflation, and a prominent officer of the United States Government came to Nebraska and advised Nebraskans to stand straight against inflation, even if they had to lean back, and that the costs of food our sole, direct and indirect products should not rise. The people of the state answered in November last.

The author in this chapter seems to approve the mild bank quarantee which our National Government has adopted. Harmless perhaps in itself, but is a basis for those who like to make strenuous appeals in the name of the people, paying little attention to future results.

* * *

In 1932 we were to experience again, as a producer of bank closings, ten cent corn, $2.50 hogs, and other values in proportion. Francis H. Sisson, now deceased, the then president of the largest bank in the U. S., said of values, in general, "When the
or the banker pay his depositors?"
value goes out, of everything, how can people pay the banker,

After the passage of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation law, the banks remaining could again experience the comfortable feeling that confidence was restored and business progress once again our portion.

1933 was a dry year and 1934 culminated in the most severe drouth known in the history of southwest Nebraska, spreading over the state and the midwest as well; values were again depressed for lack of feed. Cattle and hogs were sacrificed and accumulations of years wiped out. In the year 1935 the spring was dry, but in the latter part of May came the most terrific rain storm ever experienced in Nebraska, creating the worst and most devastating flood in the Republican valley in its known history. It began raining at about nine p.m. and rained until daylight. Folks were drowned, houses swept away, where water had never been known to flow; farms were damaged or ruined in its path and stock swept away — indeed a calamity. The river was over one and a half miles wide in front of Benkelman. We hoped this would break the drouth, but in southwest Nebraska and in fact in most parts of Nebraska and the other cornbelt states, the drouth continued. Black blizzards were in progress, so intense and laden with dust particles, that daylight was dark as night at times. Fortunately these ceased in succeeding years by rains in the south, and the growth of vegetation. In the 65 years of my experience in Nebraska there was never anything like those black blizzards, and naturally with this condition, crops did not grow and by not getting normal rainfall in southwest Nebraska nor in fact Nebraska, Kansas, and other states, crops were poor in yield, if at all, and this drouth condition has continued through 1936-7-8-9 and 40. Such a prolonged period of drouth has never been known in settlement history.

We in Dundy county have practiced summer fallow for some years, and thus in conserving moisture in this manner, have raised one crop of wheat in two years, on the hard land — that is, land that is not sandy. This also has been in practice of northwest Kansas and eastern Colorado. In our sand land, which comprises the greater portion of Dundy county, the rains that fall enter the soil and, barring 1934, during these drouth years we have raised a surplus of corn and feed. The triple A stated over 1,000,000 bushels in 1940. As a result, we have been much more fortunate during these drouth years than the counties east of us. Reflecting this situation, our bank continued to grow in deposit lines, and with this growth we increased our capital structure by investing $10,000 in additional capital. I have mentioned that when moving from Max to Benkelman November 2, 1932 our capital was $25,000, surplus $2500, and deposit lines around $120,000.00. So I think it will be of interest to append a statement of condition eight years later, November 2, 1940, which reflects the growth and progress of our people, through the most severe and lasting drouth in known history.

Statement of Condition of the State Bank, Benkelman, Nebr.
Member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
At the close of business Nov. 2, 1940.

Assets	
Cash and due from Banks	$191,536.93
Loans and Discounts	224,602.38
Government guarantee bonds and warrants	59,229.19
Real Estate, furniture and fixtures	7,135.00
	$482,503.50
Liabilities	
Capital Stock common	$ 35,000.00
Surplus and profits	15,927.92
Deposits	431,575.58
	$482,503.50

Personnel

F. G. Stilgebouer, Pres.	C. F. Stilgebouer, Ass't. Cashier
D. F. Gallatin, V.P., Cashier	R. M. Buffington, Ass't. Cashier

Velma M. Barger, Clerk

* * *

Benkelman, Nebraska
Nov. 2, 1943

I have been over three years writing the history contained in this volume, and did not intend to reach beyond 1940 touching any events, but the years 1941, 1942 and 1943 were good years, normally so, and I do feel that to show the rapid recovery of our people from the prolonged drouths, that a statement should be inserted here at the close of business three years later than the one appended on preceding page. Taxes and back interest, and many mortgages have been cleaned up and paid, as well as old bank debts. The loans of the bank now, are largely expansion obligations, and our people are correspondingly happy. Statement now follows:

Nov. 2, 1943.

Assets

Cash and due from banks	$ 948,118.88
Loans and discounts	219,864.89
Loans, Commodity Cr. Guarantee	131,026.44
Government bonds and warrants	228,838.00
Banking house furniture and fixtures	4,721.00
	$1,532,569.21

Liabilities

Capital stock, Common	$ 35,000.00
Surplus	22,500.00
Undivided profits	15,717.71
Deposits, local	1,360,307.25
U.S. War Loan Deposits	99,044.25
	$1,532,569.21

Personnel

F. G. Stilgebouer, President	J. Milo Spaulding, Teller
D. E. Gallatin, V.P., Cashier	LaNeta E. Weiss, Clerk
R. M. Buffington, Ass't. Cashier	Mildred J. Jones, Clerk

* * *

In the fall and winter of 1932 and 1933 the banks generally were experiencing difficulty, until in some states moratorium was declared and with banks in reserve cities tieing up reserves, its repercussions were felt all down the line to the smaller banks. Nebraska had no such issue, but no doubt some of the reserve cities in the state felt its results in states where such proclamations were issued for the public welfare. When President Roosevelt was inaugurated an order went out to National and State authorities closing all banks temporarily, which is known in history as the "Bank Holiday." Only sound banks were permitted to open, this in about a week, and when opened the government had provided for additional capital, where needed, so that confidence was again restored, but values of all property went down as is always the case when the credit structure of the nation is disturbed.

During the fall campaign a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, for the purpose of insuring deposits up to a certain sum, was especially advocated by the Democratic party — Congressman Steagell being its leader. This was early enacted into law by an appropriation from the government and an appropriation of part of the surplus of the Federal Reserve Banks as capital, and an assessment of 1/12% per annum on all deposits in the banks as a fund to pay losses. At first, it was called a temporary law pending further study, insuring up to $2500 of any one depositor. After exhaustive study and research, the law was revised into a permanent one insuring up to $5000 of the funds of any one depositor. Thus all depositors were protected up to a maximum of $5000 if the bank is a member of the corporation. The law had in it the vital safe-guards of sound banking lacking in our state guarantee fund law, and others vital to its function and perpetuation. Annual examinations with its own auditors and examiners, with power to require increase of capital in harmony with deposits, and to refuse membership where new banks were organized where not needed and infringing on banks in operation. It could set the maximum interest payable on deposits, and charge out assets considered of a weak and questionable nature. In fact, it worked in harmony with Federal and State authorities with one end in view, "sound banking." We secured a copy of the law, and after a study of its provisions believed it to be organized on sound principles and early applied for membership, were examined and accepted in the temporary law. Later, we were examined and accepted in the permanent one, and as a restorer and maintainer of confidence we believe it worth its cost. The funds of the corporation have now grown to nearly a half billion, through investment of its capital and assessments. Mr. Leo Crowly, the chairman of the board, in his annual report of June 30, 1940, says, that after paying losses of weak banks carried on since the "holiday" the funds have increased to such an extent that he recommends a reduction in assessments — a pleasing record, indeed.

Our experience as a member of the organization has been pleasing and profitable. Our people believe in its soundness as a protector of deposits and the confidence necessary to a growing deposit line is apparently fully restored. In addition to the auditing and examinations annually by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, we are also audited and examined by our own state appointees of the banking department, each taking three days to complete the work, which in every way is accurate and thorough. Also we are required to make detailed independent reports four times a year to the banking department, annual reports to the F.D.I.C. and publish reports of condition in a paper of general circulation in the county, that the public and depositors may be informed. We believe that the day of bank failures is over, by reasons stated above, and that confidence, that prime requisite in banking, is fully restored.

Under the present set-up all officers and employees are bonded, burglary and daylight hold-up insurance is carried, all bonds are insured, notes and investments must be sound, adequate capital, surplus and profits to care for losses and shrinkage in values as they occur, hence my optimism of no more bank failures, with its consequent losses to depositors, and bankers.

You will recall that I mentioned the fact that when we came to Dundy county in the fall of 1922 there were seven banks in operation, and now only one. Red Willow county suffered almost severely in the deflation and drouth period. In 1922 it had eleven banks—three in McCook, two in Indianola, two in Bartley, two in Lebanon, one in Danbury and one in Marion,—an overbanked situation. Now there are only three in the county—two in McCook and one in Bartley. Ray C. Murphy, after the purchasing of his competing bank, some years later decided to pay off his depositors, which he did because of drouth and lack of business to justify operation. The rest were liquidated by the banking department. It is a sad commentary on human endeavor that the record must thus be made but again quoting Francis H. Sisson, "When the value goes out of everything how can the people pay the banks, or the banker his depositor?" There were many other contributing causes. The last eight years the drouth period has dealt in the extreme with the citizens of Red Willow county, it being hard land as it is, both as to crops and pasture and many people at the beginning in comfort cannot now pay their taxes, many others have lost their farms, not from lack of endeavor or from extravagance, but as the final result of the prolonged drouth. Now, the fall of 1940, conditions as to moisture are much more promising and we hope and trust that the long drouth cycle is approaching an end and southwestern Nebraska will again experience the normal seasonal rainfall and the happy condition that is promised, "Whatsoever ye soweth, that shall ye also reap." It has been a long hard pull but the rising generation have the spirit of their pioneer ancestors and like them, have nobly carried on, season after season to disappointment, and with hope again and renewed endeavor. Surely 1941 will reward such constancy.

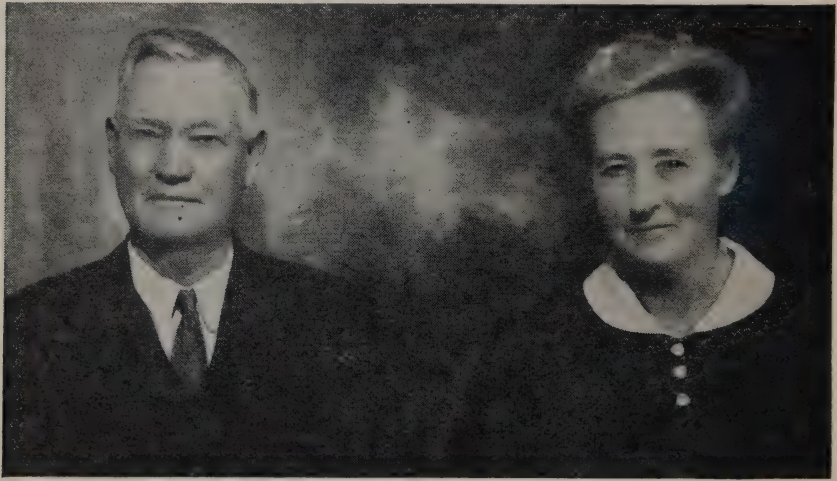
Southwestern Nebraska is peopled by as choice a people as found anywhere; climate is healthful, social environments uplifting, and with the coming of the rains again, recovery will be rapid. I recall a preacher homesteader of the early days who believed in both the spiritual and physical man saying, "Work as though you were going to live forever, but also pray as though you were going to die tomorrow." Many have died financial deaths but all honor to them for their persistence in their work and their reward will surely come from the Giver of all good.

In the last twenty years to some extent, and the last ten years to a very large degree, the tractor and power machinery have displaced the farm-raised power in the line of horses and mules and the feed to care for them, towards the so-called improved motive power, to such an extent that in combination with the triple A as administered, it has displaced numerous family-sized farms by larger units and thus deprived many deserving families from an opportunity of making a living. The pity and sad part of it is, that the larger unit operators, as tenants, are no better off financially if as well, when machinery, gas, oil and repair bills are paid for, than they were when operating family-sized farms and doing the work of their own job and helping the neighbors, that they now no longer have. The family-sized farms of earlier days fed enormous quantities of grain and forage to their power and their power reproduced itself and thus surplus was consumed where produced and power replenished by its own production on the farm, both in livestock and feed. Now the power is fed gas, oil and purchased fuel at an enormous cost to the farmer compared to the sale price of his products. The power reproduction is out of pocket in heavy repair bills and depreciation, with the consequent agricultural surplus remaining on the farms, financed by a munificient government at such a price that the farmer for the last few years cannot afford to feed the corn to his hogs and if he did resulted in a loss. What the final results will be in this transition cannot be foreseen, but one result is plainly noticeable, farm population is growing less, farm land values are declining in proportion by reason of lacking the added value of a home, and a surplus of jobless people created that must have opportunity for work, even if the government must issue more bonds to provide such an opportunity. It has been our experience in our business transactions with the farmers that those who have operated family-sized farms with horses, milked a few cows, properly cared for their poultry, were making progress to some extent each yea, even in these times, as contrasted to the high-priced, mechanical-powered operator, on tenant farms. It is a machine age, the love of the horse as such is waning, and with it, the tenant's opportunity to get a start and make a living. The pity of it all is that this transition is called progress when the real progress is retrogression in the opportunity of farmers to follow their profession, to rear their families in the neighborly neighborhood communities, and they must seek work in other already over-crowded lines of endeavor. As the younger folks come to maturity, there are no longer places for them on the farms where three or four families made a living and some progress. Now a one-family, large-mechanized operator does the job, with no more net results than each individual operator realized. We have no quarrel with the factories and the machine vendors but the "proof of the pudding is in the eating." Net results of the season's labor is after all in opportunity and the cash after repair bills, fuel, supplies and depreciations are taken care of. It is a problem, that like others must be solved and with increasing costs to the farmer for his purchases without commensurate increase in his production sale prices, its solution will indeed be difficult. Let us hope that it will be solved in the interest and the common good of humanity.

Chapter XXXIX

1888-1938. Golden Wedding.
A Very Personal Chapter.

THE GOLDEN WEDDING. Chapter 39 recites the incident of half a century wedded happiness. In many of the preceding chapters the connubial bliss of this couple appears in frank and well written sentiments. It does honor to the man, and credit to the consort. It does not often appear in books where sentiments like these are so frankly written. In any event, they are wholesome and inspiring to all who may read or hear. A half century milestone is a fitting station for renewal in age of a youthful and almost lifelong enjoyment. To the fifty years



A picture of Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Stilgebouer, taken prior to their Golden Wedding. Fifty years of wedded happiness.

were added two, and then the tragedy which must come to many who have lived their scriptural allotted time as nature permitted and in that relation to which both consented. The chapter by the editor of the Benkelman Post is appropriate, well written and touched upon many facts, qualities and virtues of the one who passed on January 23, 1940. In her home where

"She has lived for those who loved her
For those who had known her true,
And the Heaven smiled above her
And awaiting her spirit too.

For the human ties that did bind her,
For the task her God assigned her
For the bright hopes left behind her
And the good that she could do."

* * *

As December 25, 1938 was approaching, we decided to remember the occasion of fifty years of happy wedded life by inviting our brothers and sisters, and their husbands and wives, within reach to be with us. Of the eight children in Rosa's family, Edward and Louie had passed on; of the six children in my family, all are living. Those present of Rosa's family were Ambrose Ruby and wife, Danbury; Maud Ruby Messner and husband, Danbury; John Ruby and wife, McCook; Howard Ruby and wife, Ft. Morgan, Colo.; Rosa Ruby Stilgebouer, Benkelman; Annie Ruby Puelz and husband absent, Idaho. Those present of my family were: W. J. Stilgebouer (wife not well) Danbury; F. G. Stilgebouer, Benkelman; Lulu Stilgebouer Green and husband, Danbury; Solomon H. Stilgebouer and wife, absent, California; Edward B. Stilgebouer and wife, absent, California; Ella M. Mack, widow, absent, Illinois; our son S. W. Stilgebouer and wife and son; Dent E. Gallatin, wife and son. Will's wife sent an original poem and it was read, as were letters from those not privileged to be present. Rosa desired to prepare the dinner herself, which she did, turkey and all the "fixins" and the younger folks did the table and serving work. It was indeed a happy reunion, and enjoyed and cherished by us all. Time has furrowed our brows and brought its changes, but not in the love and affection for each other, and apparently, all of us were in good health. Fortunate indeed, were Rosa and I, who were privileged to go through life's pathway hand in hand sharing each other's joys and sorrows, a tower of strength to each other for fifty years and through it all, our love for each other was supreme.

We had recently had our pictures taken as a token of the occasion for each one of our families, and on display was our wedding picture, with life before us, our silver wedding picture on the halfway route, and the one of fifty years. As to dress, some change on the part of the ladies, but we men still looked natural and comfortable. Fifty years is a long time in the mature part of anyone's life and brings its changes, but in the formative period of a new country, the changes have been more marked, many of our earlier friends have been called in death, others moved to other parts, some of their companions have passed on, leaving the other to carry on alone, tragic indeed.

We, too, have had our tragic hours, our joys, happiness, contentment and progress. From the sod shanty on the claim, we made the transition to the ownership of several nice homes at different times, and now have our little cottage, built after our own planning, a good business that I enjoy and splendid friendships in a congenial community for us both. Mrs. Stilgebouer especially enjoyed her church, its fellowships and particularly the Ladies' Aid.

How little did we think on that Christmas Day, 1938 that Mrs. Stilgebouer would be the next to break the family circle. She was apparently in good health at that time with the promise of years. The next August, 1939, she developed a condition that puzzled her physician and was taken to a local hospital, largely for observation. Other physicians were called in consultation, and early in November she was taken to an eye and ear specialist. He advised X-ray treatment. When pictures were taken of the body to ascertain the cause of her stomach disorder it was discovered that gall stones were the cause of her distress and inability to eat sufficient food to keep up her strength. The X-ray relieved the pain in her eye and ear, but I knew she could not stand an operation in her weakened condition, without which she could not recover. The physicians advised me that at best only a few months were left, and that an operation was not to be considered. At this time she was in the Mary Lanning hospital in Hastings, Nebraska. Our son was with us; I told him I felt Mama should be told her condition and its possible and probable results. When I did, she lay for a short time, then turned to me and said, "Papa, what is to become of you?" Her first thought of me and my welfare as always. I said to her that we had talked over our plans when in health and I would carry them out, and would soon be with her, for at most, I had but few years. She seemed perfectly resigned and met the situation philosophically as always. We returned home, about the 15th of November. She was not confined to her bed until the first of January, after which she grew rapidly weaker and passed away January 23, 1940 in her own home she loved so well, being conscious within twenty-four hours of the last. She was surrounded by her immediate family, and the nurses who had so efficiently cared for her.

What more can we say? We are left to carry on. She would have us do so and in work and service, there is consolation and contentment. Life is made up of sunshine and shadows, joys and sorrows and Mrs. Stilgebouer was no stranger to any of these.

We have lived our lives of tribute to each other, she was a good wife, mother, neighbor and friend, in all things the words imply. Her home was always her chief concern. She knew both joys and sorrows at times, but in those last weeks of her life, during her illness, she manifested no sorrow. Her family were constantly with her. Our son S.W. watched over his mother, met her every wish and ministered to her with the love and tenderness of a mother herself for her child. He read to her the hundreds of cards from friends, at the times she could best enjoy them, and she appreciated them so much. Such care and thoughtfulness drives away shadows and sorrows and brings sunshine and peace in the last weeks, days and hours of life. She passed away as she had lived in the supreme faith in the promises of the Master of eternal life and a reunion in that "House not made with hands, eternally in the Heavens."

Mr. C. L. Ketler, editor of the Benkelman Post, who knew Mrs. Stilgebouer well, in an editorial paid a tribute to her life and character that she well deserved. Editorial follows:

Death Came Tuesday to Mrs. Stilgebouer

"Mrs. F. G. Stilgebouer passed away at the family home in Benkelman at nine o'clock Tuesday morning, January 23, 1940 after a long illness during which time she had been a patient at various hospitals at different times under treatment by doctors and specialists but to no avail and it had been generally known for several weeks by her family and loved ones in Benkelman and in various other points which had been her home, that the end was not far distant. Mrs. Stilgebouer was loved and revered far outside the family circle, no matter where her home had been, because she was a woman of the highest qualities, measured from whatever angle you approached.

"She was married to F. G. Stilgebouer on Christmas day, 1888, in Red Willow county and practically lived her entire life in Red Willow and Dundy counties. Five children were born to them and the death angel visited their home four times to claim one of their beloved children. The march of time saw other close relatives and many friends answer the final call from earthly existence, and so it was that it seemed that more sorrow than joy was here to experience during her earthly journey. But she was brave — brave to the point where she could endure her own sorrows and of others. That was pretty much the history of her life — kindness and devotion to her immediate family and her neighbors and she carried on almost to the day that unconsciousness overtook her. Her splendid character and wonderful influence for good, along with her sunny, cheerful attitudes towards life, reflected far beyond the home circle and carried forward deep out into the community she lived in.

"She was active in whatever way she could promote the cause of neighborly good will and church and community development but was quiet and unassuming in everything, the element of show and assumption being no part of her nature. She was tolerant of human fraility but always doing more than her part to encourage people on to greater and nobler things and showing them the way thru her splendid character and example in the worth-while things of life and living.

"And the Benkelman community, like the other communities which had been her home at various times, today sorrows with the grief-stricken husband and son in the loss of a splendid wife and mother and the relatives and friends in the passing of this splendid woman."

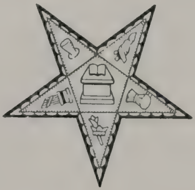
Mrs. Stilgebouer loved her home and had often said if left alone, she wanted to continue in it; hence in the building, our home was planned so that a portion of it could be rented and thus she would not be alone. If she was taken first, my plan was to go to a hotel, which I did. I think too often in life, success is measured by the accumulation of wealth, but at a time like this, when one gives up a life companion so dearly loved, the real success in life is measured by the friendships we have made. As I write these lines, more than a year after her passing, I have never spent a Sunday alone. Dent and Ray, associated with me in the bank, and their wives, I am sure have planned it to be so. Many others have had me with them and these rich friendships have indeed been a help in my loneliness and the readjustment period. These all have my gratitude and will surely be rewarded, for the Saviour said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye do it unto me." I have appreciated this kindness more than words can express. I get along well through the week, I love my work, and am at my desk from eight to nine hours a day, enjoy good health, and feel and know life is still good, and that our wide circle of friends are very kind and gracious to me, but oh! how I miss the going home and meeting her after the day's work is done. When I think of others I have known, the wife and mother taken, the husband and small children left to carry on, I can but feel fortunate and contented. She has left me a heritage of her beautiful companionship and memories.

Chapter XL

Masonry and Star

TO THOSE who have been admitted to the Esoteric Order of Masonry, and have imbibed the principles, have seen the inner workings of that ancient and honorable Order, for half a century, and who have followed through the higher degrees, presided over them, and rendered services, and who have been entitled to receive the honors of the Order, and tangible emblems thereof, have a pardonable pride in their achievements, and a distinctive satisfaction in having them conferred.

That our author took early interest and membership in masonry and aspired to and received exalted honors in the several stations gives him the right to stand as it were on Nebo, looking toward a promised land. But against him entering there is no interdict. He is unlike Moses, he will have the view, he will have the entry, he will have the happiness in meeting the multiplied million brethren who met on equality with each other; acted with the symbol of uprightness, and for time parted on the quantern.



I am a Mason and we were both members of the Eastern Star which, in her earlier life, she enjoyed very much. I was made a master mason in February, 1890 and am now a member of Bartley Lodge No. 228 located at Bartley, Nebraska. This lodge communicated with the local lodge in Benkelman, Nebraska expressing a desire to be present at their next regular communication for the purpose of presenting to me the 50-year Masonic emblem provided by the Grand Lodge of the State of Nebraska, for its fifty-year members. This arrangement was made, and on February 23, 1940, sixteen of the Brethren, one of whom with me assisted in the organization of the Bartley Lodge, came to Benkelman as the guests of the Benkelman Lodge to thus honor one of its citizens. As I knew they were coming, I prepared a history of Masonry in southwestern Nebraska thinking it would be of interest to the Brethren. I now copy the Presentation speech by Daniel Mitchell acting for the master of Bartley Lodge No. 228, and my response. I quote:

"For thou, O God, hast heard my vows; thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name." Brethren:

Throughout the pages of that revered volume which is the Great Light of Masonry, length of life is held up as a reward to the righteous. The Psalmist sings, "The days of our years are three score years and ten." This has come to be regarded as the standard of the usual allotment of the time of earthly existence, and, "If by reason of strength they be four score years," we consider that the additional days are the heritage of those that fear the name of the Lord.

To be eligible to receive a "Fifty Year" badge of service in Masonry the recipient must have passed the traditional boundary line and entered upon the years which are the heritage of the faithful and which, of all the years of life, hold the richest and most coveted blessings.

The life of a mason may be divided into three distinctive stages.

In youth, he serves with enthusiasm. Intolerant of orderly progress, he attempts to right the wrongs of the world by the sheer force of his passionate zeal for service. This stage contributes to progress and keeps our institution a living, vital power in advancing civilization.

In middle life, the enthusiast becomes the calm, assured leader among the craftsmen. He has learned the wisdom of restraint and the advantages of following the traveled pathways. He watches for sign posts and proceeds with care, that he may not lead the younger or weaker brethren into paths too difficult for them to follow. This stage gives to our institution its stability, and assures its permanence.

Age, the heritage of those who have passed successfully through the previous periods, is the stage of wisdom and reflection. It is the time of fulfillment and the reward for fidelity. Not until man has passed through the turmoil of youth and the plodding, less eventful period of his adult years, can he fully evaluate the true meaning of Masonry, the part it plays in the building of men, the influence of a God-fearing institution in a world of selfish striving. Age, then, gives Masonry its meaning and proves its worth.

Brother Forster G. Stilgebouer. The records show that you have been a Master Mason in good standing, for a period of fifty years. For over half a century, you have given of yourself, of your substance, and of your devotion, to Masonry. You can look back upon a lifetime of service to the Fraternity; you have assisted the widow and orphan; you have promulgated the virtues of the brotherhood; you have protected its good name. Your fidelity entitles you to the admiration and to the esteem of your brethren, in your lodge and in the Grand Jurisdiction of Nebraska.

This emblem of service is the evidence of that appreciation which the Grand Lodge wishes to express to you; it sets you apart as an example of fidelity, that "holiest of all good things which abide in a human breast."

Your period of service is not yet ended. May you continue, for many more years, to enjoy the companionship of your brethren, and to inspire them to deeds of valor as well as to the faithful performance of the duties to which their Masonic vows commit them.

As you wear this badge, wear it with pride which comes from the performance of duty; the pride which is the reward of faithful service. May you long enjoy the heritage of those that fear the name of the Lord."

Brother Forster G. Stilgebouer's Response:

Brethren of Bartley Lodge No. 228 *and of Justice Lodge No.* 180 *and Visiting Brethren, I Greet You.*

It is indeed a distinction and honor to me, of which I am justly proud, to experience the fact, that you Brethren of Bartley Lodge No. 228 have driven to this city, the home of my adoption, in order that you might present to me in the presence of the Brethren here assembled, an emblem conferred by the Grand Lodge of the State of Nebraska, representing fifty years of membership and service.

I thank you Brethren very much, and will endeavor to wear it with honor to the Fraternity, and credit to myself. May no act of mine as a Mason ever bring discredit to this ancient and honorable institution, which has outlived the reign of kings and survived the mutations of emperors.

Fifty years is a long time in the mature experience of any man, and more particularly in the formation and progress of an undeveloped country such as Southwestern Nebraska was at the time we came here in 1875. As we contemplate the changes in retrospect, and while the eternal principles of Masonry as represented by the three great lights never change, Masonry has gone forward in physical progress and service, in full harmony with other changes in the passing years. I have thought that it might be of interest to review some of the changes, as Justice Lodge, as well as Bartley Lodge is connected with and an outgrowth or expansion of that early history.

As a background of the Stilgebouers, I wish to state that my grandfather was a Master Mason, very proud of the fact, and was tenderly laid at rest by the Masonic Lodge of which he was a member, in 1873. It stands out vividly among my earliest recollections. My father, Solomon W. Stilgebouer was made a Master Mason in the same lodge, in Shelbyville, Illinois, and came to Danbury, Red Willow County, Nebraska, in the month of March, 1875.

The family, after his location, followed in May. At that time, the great divides between all the streams were wholly uninhabited, except for the buffalo, the antelope, and other wild game. The homesteaders were mostly very poor people, who by necessity, if not from choice, were confined along the streams where wood and water were available. My father being a zealous Mason, early visited, several times, the nearest Masonic Lodge about 60 miles east, at Melrose, Nebraska. Later a rival town by name of Orleans absorbed Melrose and with it the Masonic Lodge called Melrose. I presume that the lodge at Orleans still retains its name of Melrose, for I recall that we of Bartley Lodge No. 228 in the late nineties examined a brother who was visiting us, who gave his lodge as Melrose Lodge, Orleans, Nebraska.

At that time, there was no Oxford, a very small Arapahoe, only a mill at Cambridge, a store, blacksmith shop, courthouse 12 by 24 and a few shacks in Indianola, no McCook, a very small Culbertson, and I am not sure as to Trenton and Stratton if any, and the first I recall of Benkelman was a Collinsville. There was no Masonic Lodge in any of these towns. As a few years passed it was my father's desire that a lodge be formed in Indianola, Nebraska and as a new brick courthouse had been built in Indianola an arrangement was made to lease the courtroom, for Lodge purposes. My father and a few of the Brethren visited the nearest lodge, asked for and secured a Waiver of Jurisdiction and recommendation for a lodge, under dispensation, which was granted by the Master Dec. 8, 1883, my father being appointed the Master. Working under dispensation until the next meeting of the Grand Lodge, they applied for and received a Charter under the name of Indianola Lodge, No. 123, A.F.&A.M. June 24, 1884, of which my father was the first Master.

They had a lot of work, and increased in membership very rapidly. After father had served as Master for some years, he asked that others, who were fully capable of doing the work, relieve him of that position, as he lived about 18 miles distant. It was quite a sacrifice to him, and at times very inconvenient, to drive a team monthly and sometimes oftener to meetings.

At the time of my father's retirement as Master, installation was on St. John's day, June 24th, and they had a picnic in the Indianola grove, with B. F. Rawalt, Grand Custodian, speaker and installing officer. At the close of the installation, my father was escorted to the platform, and after the Grand Custodian had to some extent reviewed his zeal for and work in Masonry, on behalf of the Indianola Lodge No. 123 A.F.&A.M. presented him with a Hunting case gold watch, with the inner lid inscribed "Presented to S. W. Stilgebouer, by Indianola Lodge No. 123

A.F.&A.M." And were we kids proud of our father, and the organization this watch represented? In the language of the kids of today, "I'll tell a man!"

Our father has long since been laid at rest by the Masonic Brethren and the organization he loved so well. The watch is now in the possession of my older brother, W. J. Stilgebouer, father of the present Master of Justice Lodge No. 180, Cecil F. Stilgebouer, this city.

The watch is still going strong, but I am indeed sorry to report, not so is the Lodge No. 123. Many years after this happy event, a discordant element arose in the lodge, largely superinduced by one man with a very small following, until the then Grand Master deemed it his duty to lift the Charter, which he did. Thus ending No. 123 as a lodge. Later a new Charter was granted to the truly Masonic Brethren, and as far as I know, peace and harmony Masonically speaking pervails.

It was out of this Lodge No. 123 Indianola, Nebraska, that waiver of Jurisdiction and Recommendations were given McCook, Stockville, Danbury, Bartley and perhaps Cambridge, but I am not sure as to the latter, all securing Dispensations and later charters. It was McCook that gave waiver of Jurisdiction and Recommendation for a lodge at Culbertson, and this lodge in turn gave the same courtesy to Benkelman, Nebraska.

After the railroad was built up the Beaver valley, and the new town of Danbury was building, my father with others of the community prevailed upon the banker to add another story for a lodge room, secured a Dispensation and later a Charter, the lodge being named Boaz Lodge No. 185. My father being Master under Dispensation and Charter, and for several years thereafter. It was Boaz Lodge No. 185, my father as Master, that in the months of December, 1889 and January and February, 1890 that favored me by admittance. I had the pleasure and honor of serving this lodge in various positions, and as Master.

In the year 1893, I with others attempted to get waiver of Jurisdiction from Indianola for a lodge at Bartley, Nebraska, but failed in this, as the then Master did some Missionary work, and had the majority against us, explaining to me that he did not think we had sufficient territory and people to merit the attempt to start a lodge. He was a good friend of mine and I know that he was sincere in his belief. We waited the usual requirement of time, and again applied for waiver of Jurisdiction and Recommendation. This time, I being acquainted with the most of the Brethren, did some missionary work myself, and with the result that we secured that which we desired. After working under dispensation the usual time required, we applied for and received a Charter under the name of Bartley Lodge No. 228, A.F. & A.M. whose seal I had the honor of designing, it being a square and compass interlaced with the letter G. This was in 1895, Allison G. Keys being the Master under dispensation and the first Master under Charter.

I served Bartley lodge several times as Master, being both a member under Dispensation and Charter, and am still a member of that lodge. It was in Bartley Lodge that my son, S. W. Stilgebouer, received his degrees, the third with my father a visitor and as acting Master. I was accorded the privilege of acting as Master in the receiving of the Third degree, by my son-in-law, Dent E. Gallatin. This lodge, contrary to the idea of the Master who was instrumental in us being refused in our first application, has been a wonderful, little lodge and is still going strong in the practice of the tenets of the profession and proud in so doing.

An incident that is worthy of note, when I was representing the Bartley Lodge at Grand Lodge in 1896 occurred at Grand Lodge. Mr. H. H. Wilson, who for many years since was professor in the University Law school, Lincoln, Nebraska, and of recent years has been the dean of the law school, was our Grand Master. He was a gentleman of fine appearance, good voice, and commanding presence. I and those sitting near me noticed some of the brethren carrying a small, pale-looking man, on a chair, in the lodge hall with great deference and apparent feeling. I later learned that this was done by Past Grand Masters. They carried him up to the rostrum, and Grand Master H. H. Wilson vacating the Master's chair, he was placed therein. The gentleman placed in the chair was very feeble in strength, but had a smile of gratitude on his face. Grand Master H. H. Wilson, then introduced the feeble old gentleman to the lodge, as the first Grand master of the Grand Lodge of the state of Nebraska, Robert C. Jourdan. Mr. Wilson said then, that he was going to try and speak the thoughts, that occur to Past Grand Master Jourdan, were he physically able to express them. He then reviewed the struggle through which Mr. Jourdan passed in getting a Grand Jurisdiction of Masonry in Nebraska, and the nearly forty years of faithful work in its progress, closing by paying tribute to Brother Jourdan in his masterful oratorical style and language, as to his life and character.

I recall that I thought at that time, if I live so that when I get old and feeble, a brother of the Fraternity could say the nice things of me I then heard, it certainly would be a crowning achievement of life's goal. I refer largely, not to his opportunity of having been in a position to help in the organization of the Grand Jurisdiction of Nebraska, and its progress, but in the life and character of that man Jourdan. This is the man, in honor of whom the Jourdan medal was created by the Grand Lodge.

Brethren, I have always had a high regard for the Masonic order, for the gentlemen who compose its membership, as being a class or group, just a little better than any group I have ever known. I know that young men are greatly benefited in meeting with this class of men, in their morals and outlook on life.

It cannot and should not take the place of church, but of those who are members of churches, and contributors in time and money, among them as leaders, you will find many members of the Masonic Fraternity.

Brethren, I desire to say in closing, that the scythe of time has greatly thinned the membership of the Charter members of Bartley Lodge No. 228, many of whom have gone to their reward. Let us so live, "That when the Son of Righteousness shall descend to collect the ransomed dead, that we too shall be found worthy and ready." It was said once upon a time, that, "You now stand a just and upright Mason." When the summons for our departure shall come, and the traditional sprig of acacia is planted at the head of our grave, may our Brethren standing near feel deep down in their hearts, "Here lies a just and upright Mason."

Chapter XLI

Old Settler's Pageant

THE fortunate readers of this book will find many interesting features in its construction. First in the early chapters there is not found adhered to, a jealous devotion to its central character as is often exhibited and seen in autobiographies. Rather there are commanding facts given, historic, social, educational, religious and vocational facts, and circumstances to give environment, activities, ambitions and achievements of others. As if it were said "Here is a situation with many adverse conditions and discouragements." As time unfolds it will be said: "Have you mastered these, or have they subdued you?" This life work, enterprise and experience have answered that:

"It was a noble Roman in Rome's imperial day
Who heard a Coward Croaker before the Castle say
They're safe within the fortress,
There is no way to shake it
On! on! exclaimed the Roman,
I will find a way, or make it."

So it was with our author, with many southwestern Nebraskans who were with him in youth and manhood, and are with him in age. They gave and received the helping hand. Nay, more, they contributed the rich products of their memories by voice and pen to illumine this book, and illuminate tri-state corners.

The book opened in dramatic form, recalling the battle of the Faces, Red and Pale. While the author was an observer and later a versatile actor, and now for two score years an effective leader of the community and its faithful scribe.

Fortunate the community, county, district or state that possesses a self abnegator who had loyalty, industry and perservance to lead in preserving the past. It is indeed a legacy of worth left by one who is serving his fellow men and will serve posterity when ink is faded and pens are rust, and "These poor lisping stammering tongues are silent in the graves."

It was a happy conception and appropriate literary and dramatic closing chapter for the book, which opened in battle and closed in peace, industry, intelligence and wholesome progress. History reenacted, for the aged to recall, and others to read, that they may relate to distant generations.

Of this chapter and those who collaborated might not Lord Bacon have had in mind when he wrote:

"Industrious persons, by monument, names, words, proverbs, traditions, private records and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of books, that concern not story, and the like, do save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time."

* * *

We now bring to a close the history of our lives, as lived and shared by us and our neighbors, 47 years in Red Willow county and 18 years in Dundy county, Nebraska. Thus fulfilling a desire on the part of Mrs. Stilgebouer and Bernice, many years ago, that this history be written. Its writing has been a labor of love for me, and I have relived many of the pleasures of the past, as well as its sorrows and tragic events. No doubt many of the incidents that impressed me so vividly must be lived to bring out their chief importance. Others, perhaps of equal interest, which are not mentioned, all had their part in growth and character and the building of the West, and I am happy that we have been privileged to have had at least a minor part in its building. I can think of no more appropriate close than a summary of Acts I, II, III, and complete text of Act IV of a pageant entitled *Sunset on the Trail of the Pioneer* which was given August 29 and 30, 1940 in the Indianola Park, following the Old Settlers picnic which is an annual event in Indianola, Nebraska.

Mr. E. E. Spencer of Indianola, the author of the first three acts, instructor and manager of the pageant, desired to bring out various phases of the early history of southwestern Nebraska.

Act I The habits and customs, the thoughts, feelings and volitions of the American Indian in his native costume and environment; his attempts to retain and check the white man's encroachment on his domain; the raid on the "Buck surveying party" on the Beaver and their extinction by Chief Whistler and his followers; the method of a war dance before going, and their jubilant return.

Act II The Trapper and Trader was shown in his habits of life, his questionable and unfair dealings with the Indians, thus creating the lasting enmity of the red man, and such enmity being passed on to the Settlers.

Act III Part I An old time early day picnic in the fall of 1878 in which the settlers were represented in their early day custom of chorus singing, readings, debating and platform dancing, fully bringing out the social equality and friendliness that was prevalent among the people of that day. The picnic being finally broken up by a settler coming and reporting that the Cheyenne Indians were on a raid and were headed this way.

Part II of Act III represented the coming of two families in covered wagons and their decision to camp together and in a spirit of friendliness share their evening meal. The meal was prepared over a campfire and while eating, a buffalo hunter arrived with an Indian squaw who was wounded in the Battle of Massacre canyon, she taken to the home of Mr. Korn, near Indianola, where she soon died and was buried on the bluff northwest of Indianola, now a pasture, her grave being marked by native headstone and footstone and a cement slab on which is inscribed the names of the men who laid her away. The writer visited this historic spot last summer, personally knew the men who had a part in this early day event. The historic spot is guarded by gas pipe railing surrounding it, fastened to posts set in cement foundation.

Act IV Mr. Spencer desired to have brought out in this act, some of the principles and reasons for the organization of the "Old Settlers Association" and its annual picnic. He also desired that this act bring out some of the incidents and experiences of early day life.

Mrs. Asa Wolfe, who long has been secretary of the association and county historian, and F. G. Stilgebouer were the speakers. Text of Act IV now follows:

SUNSET ON THE TRAIL OF THE PIONEER

Act IV

A goodly number of Old Settlers, all elderly people, arrived on the picnic ground in automobiles. After a short period of greeting between the old settlers and their friends and neighbors, Mrs. Alice Wolfe, Secretary and Historian of the Red Willow County Old Settler's Association says, "Folks, let's be seated for a short meeting and program. After the program is over we can again resume the visiting where we felt off and eat our picnic supper." (After all have been seated Mrs. Wolfe arises and says:) "Pioneers of Red Willow county, Nebraska, sons and daughters of pioneers and friends. Today marks the 38th milestone in the life of the Old Settler's Association of Red Willow county, Nebraska, and today is the 38th annual picnic of the association. During recent years we have all observed with sorrow and regret the passing of that sturdy and generous group of people, the pioneers of Red Willow county, until today there are only a few left who are able to attend this picnic. It can truly be said that the sun is fast setting on the trail of the pioneer and those of us now living are either sons and daughters of the early pioneers or of a younger generation.

"Because we believe in this wonderful country of ours; because we believe in its form of government and its institutions, because we want to preserve and protect it for future generations, the Red Willow County Old Settler's Association feels that it is rendering a distinct service to Red Willow county and to this nation by annually bringing to the attention of the people of this county, and especially to the younger generations, the history of the settlement of this county. We believe it will be educational and inspirational to our younger generations to learn of the trials and tribulations of the early settlers in their attempts to carve out of the virgin wilderness our modern way of life. And we believe that we will be teaching the younger generation the meaning of true patriotism when we call to their attention the life and examples of the Old Settler.

"In the difficult times through which we are passing, it would be well for us as a nation to emulate those qualities possessed by the pioneer: His desire for a home, his industry, his thrift, his friendliness, his generosity, his hospitality, his ability to care for himself and family through periods of drouth and disaster and his faith in the future.

"We want to take you back now for a short trip through the pioneer life of Red Willow county and for our guide on this trip we have chosen a man who is well qualified, Mr. Forster G. Stilgebouer, who is now engaged in the banking business at Benkelman, Nebraska; is a son of one of the earliest pioneers of Red Willow county. For many years Mr. Stilgebouer was prominently identified with the business and social and political life of Red Willow county. Mr. Stilgebouer, when did you come to Red Willow county, Nebraska?" Mr. Stilgebouer replied, "I came as a boy, nine years of age, in the month of May, 1875, with my mother Mrs. S. W. Stilgebouer, from Tuscola, Illinois, father having proceded us in March."

Mrs. Wolfe said, "As an early teacher my mother stayed for some time in the home of your parents near Danbury. They were typical sturdy pioneers. Always friendly, hospitable, generous and obliging." Forster Stilgebouer replied, "I remember your mother well as a teacher and was one of her pupils in the early 80's. I will let you in on a little secret. The school she taught was a large school and among the students were a number of adolescent boys, of which I was one. Most of the time, I am sure that we were good boys, but at times were just boys and presumably, I was the leader and to some extent annoyed your mother. She said to me one day, 'Forster Stilgebouer, you can be the best boy and sometimes the meanest boy I ever saw.' In after years we talked and laughed over the events that brought forth that remark, and our friendship grew through the years until she was called home."

Now let us make our Pioneer Journey.

Yes, these venerable pioneers came down to us from a former generation of pioneers and at a formative period of our country's history. We honor them for their own worth and character. As young men and women they came to Red Willow county between the years 1872 and 1880 and established the foundation for its future growth and progress. During these years Red Willow county was pretty well covered with homesteads, pre-emptions and timber-claims — dotted here and there in most convenient places, with dugouts, sod houses and tents as homes for the pioneers.

(Quartette sings "Old Sod Shanty on the Claim")

In the year 1880 the Burlington and Missouri Railroad was built into the county making Indianola its terminal for a time. The railroad furnished the transportation facilities so badly needed by the settlers and was greatly appreciated by them. The coming of the railroad opened up a new era in Red Willow county.

(Quartette sings, "I've Been Working on the Railroad")

They came, men and women of that day, as pioneers who have been honored in history, song and story, not as conquering warriors come in conquest of a civilization already established, but as builders under the hope and faith of carving out of virgin soil the substance with which to live, establish homes, schools, rural and county government and churches in which to rear and educate their families. That faith and hope of the pioneers was brought to fruition and many of their descendants are with us today. Thus home, the most loved word in the secular English language, representing as it does a father, mother and children became the primary foundation of government on which all collective governments, county, state and nation must depend.

(Quartette sings, "Home Sweet Home")

That the foundations of government were laid truly and well in all things dear to the hearts of the pioneers is attested by the fact that Red Willow county is now one of the important commonwealths of this great state.

(Quartette sings, "How Firm a Foundation")

The pioneers of that day, as were all pioneers of every day and age in the settlement of this great American Republic, were poor people and by reason of that fact naturally took their homesteads along the streams and valleys where wood and water were readily accessible. Thus it was that the Republican, Willow, Driftwood, and Beaver valleys were settled first as is attested by the fact that School District No. 1 was located on the Willow, No. 2 at Indianola, No, 3 and 4 on the Beaver.

(Quartette sings, "School Days")

It has been my observation and belief that the real hardships of the early days were reserved for those pioneers who practically covered the divides between the streams in 1879 and 1880. They had no wood with which to form the supporting roofs of their homes nor fuel nor posts and no water for family or stock. The wood was often supplied by the generosity of their neighbors along the streams and the water was hauled from their wells. One incident will cover many of a similar character; Jack and Peter Howard, homesteaders on the divide, hauled their water for stock and family from the S. W. Stilgebouer well on the Beaver. This was done for several months, until their neighbor Frank Weaver living west of them decided to dig a well. Weaver was assisted by his neighbor Jake Fouts and the well was the first one on the divide near the top. They dug down 212 feet to water passing several veins of dry sand which had to be curbed, thus entailing some cash expense. The depth of the well and expense whipped the Howards, Jack saying, 'We can't stand the expense of digging, or rope to pull up the water or waste of time in doing it.' They abandoned their homesteads and went back to Iowa.

(Quartette sings, "Old Oaken Bucket")

Samuel Graham, a brother-in-law of the Howards, who was similarly situated, remained and died owning his homestead and timber-claim free from debt and spent his declining years in comfort and plenty. Mr. Graham also served as county commissioner of this county. Thus it was, that through those formative years, there was a gradual refining with the stout-hearted and pure-gold remaining. There were many unavoidable hardships to disturb the peace and tranquility of the pioneers and in many instances tried their souls, such as the Indian raids, grasshopper raids, drouths and numerous prairie fires, all of them of tremendous destruction and importance, yet I prefer to pass over them, as the progress of the pioneers was steadily secularly onward and spiritually upward. In recalling those days, I love to think of the wonderful spirit of brotherly love and kindness manifested by one pioneer to another. They were apparently cemented together with that spirit of helpfulness that was really Christ-like.

There were no doctors to help in sickness. No nurses to care for and soothe the fevered brow with their kindly ministrations, no undertakers and many times no ministers of gospel to preside in the last sad rites, and no sextons to carefully lay our loved ones away, but the kindliness of our neighbors substituted in sympathy, efficiency and helpfulness. God did bless those early neighbors and friends, for they were truly neighbors as portrayed in the Bible on the trip to Jericho. I love to think of the preachers of those early days and years, missionaries some of them, homesteaders others, neighborly, kindly, uneducated according to present standards, but a zeal and Christian fortitude that could well be emulated today.

(Quartette sings, "Onward Christian Soldiers")

I love to think of the literary and debating societies, as not only a place of social gathering but as a source of information and profit as well. I love to think of the neighborly baseball games where vanquished were cheered as well as the victor, all treated with respect their due, and the umpire a neighbor to all, whose decisions were taken as final. I love to think of the dances we had in the homes of those who were fortunate enough to have a floor and who so kindly opened their homes to us for our enjoyment.

(Quartette sings, "Wait for the Wagon")

At these dances and social gatherings the ladies were revered and respected as such, and "John Barleycorn," that destroyer of human happiness, was never present. A lunch was served by the gracious hostess, a few songs were sung and then we hied away home contented and happy.

(Quartette sings, "Goodnight Ladies")

I love to think of the social times spent in each other's homes, on Sundays attending Sunday School, then church if so fortunate as to have a minister present; then home for the day with some neighbor or they with us. The meals, all of a similar character—very little variation in the menu, but if lacking in variety, no apologies or excuses were made, the hospitality was so gracious and genuine, our enjoyment was complete. Yes, I love to think of and relive those splendid and happy associations. We were young and full of vigor and could and did look forward with faith, hope and confidence to the future, all united in our zeal for our friends, neighbors and homes. Yes, we had our hardships, but we also had our compensations. Our philosophy of life was to minimize the one and draw happiness and contentment from the other.

(Quartette sings, "When You and I were Young, Maggie")

The years 1881 to 1940, like all the years in human history, have brought their problems and hardships, also their happiness, contentment and compensations, and taken as a whole, the progress has ever been onward and upward.

In this generation, there are grave problems that must be met and solved, problems of social and economic welfare and in the passing of the Old Pioneer, who represent the pioneers of a bygone age, may their spirit and the wisdom of our fathers rise up in the souls of this generation who must pioneer to a correct and just solution of the problems confronting them. We hope and trust that the solution will be based on the foundation laid by their progenitors, being Faith, Hope and Charity. Faith in God, the giver of all good. Hope that in all things, Justice will be done, and Charity towards all mankind.